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Equality Considerations during Covid-19 Outbreak: Communications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities must pay attention to the rights of people in relation to their protected characteristics in all that we do, all of the time.

These rights include the ability to access information and eligible services on an equal basis and to have reasonable adjustments made to cater for a disability.

The following is a list of issues for consideration and suggested mitigating action for communications.

This does not cover all potential risks and challenges for those from protected equality groups but aims to draw attention to key areas for consideration.

Communications:

Issue (potential or actual)	Suggested Mitigating action
Deaf, British Sign Language user	
<p>Limited understanding of English; require information in BSL.</p> <p>Very little information about coronavirus has been made available/promoted in BSL.</p> <p>There are a significant minority (usually in the older age groups) who are not digitally savvy and need face to face visits.</p> <p>SMS texting is a popular means of communicating for many (but not all).</p>	<p>Provide important information in BSL video.</p> <p>Interpreting service GCC have an in-house BSL interpreters. Interpreters can be booked though the Glasgow.gov.uk website.</p> <p>Contact Scotland A telephone video relay service can be used to call/receive calls from BSL users. This service is full funded by the Scottish Government and instructions are available on the Contact Scotland site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy Read is also acceptable but BSL should be made available where this could be considered a 'reasonable adjustment'.• Provide BSL interpreter 'in vision' signing as part of important spoken word video/TV. Subtitles are NOT accessible to Deaf people.• Ensure staff/volunteers know how to access interpreting services, as above, if they are likely to come into contact with Deaf people (for example, if dropping off supplies to home of Deaf resident as part of targeted support for people who are shielding).• Include options for SMS contact to helplines etc.• Include Contact Scotland Link in contact telephone information.• Recognise that for some, face to face visiting is the only option. (Find out who these people are). <p>PHE campaign resources in BSL: https://www.nhsinform.scot/translations/languages/british-sign-</p>

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Issue (potential or actual)	Suggested Mitigating action
	<p>language-bsl/illnesses-and-conditions/coronavirus-covid-19</p> <p>Training: Deaf Awareness e-learning is also available on GOLD.</p> <p>Voluntary sector: British Deaf Association, Deaf Scotland, National Deaf Children’s Society and Deafblind Scotland can assist with reaching out to Deaf community.</p>
Limited English Language	
<p>Lack of translations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Plain English in all communications. • Provide written/online information in Easy Read format. • Include an ‘alternative format statement’ in all correspondence. • Provide information in foreign language on request or if it is known the person requires it. • Promote any government/official guidance that is available in alternative languages or formats. <p>Translations Translations can be requested through Cordia Linguistics</p> <p>Suggested Wording for Alternative Format Statement This document can be made available in a variety of alternate formats and community languages on request. If you would like more information about this or would like to request an alternative format or language, please contact:</p> <p>Covid 19 guidance in alternative formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Guidelines – Doctors of the World • Hand Washing Guidance - PHE • Social Distancing – UK Government
Learning Disability and groups with communication difficulties	
<p>Complex and changing information difficult to understand and follow.</p> <p>Lack of information in Easy Read</p> <p>Lack of direct instruction and use of metaphor unhelpful.</p> <p>Inconsistencies in messages can be confusing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Plain English in all communications. • Provide written/online information in Easy Read format. • Be consistent and avoid changing messages without being clear of the reasons for the change. • Include an ‘alternative format statement’ in all correspondence. • Promote any government/official guidance that is available in alternative formats. <p>Suggested Wording for Alternative Format Statement This document can be made available in a variety of alternate</p>

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Issue (potential or actual)	Suggested Mitigating action
	<p>formats and community languages on request. If you would like more information about this or would like to request an alternative format or language, please contact:</p> <p>Covid 19 guidance in alternative formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay at home – UK Government• Hand Washing Guidance - PHE• Social Distancing – UK Government
Deaf/hard of hearing	
Encouraging/use of phone contact during social isolation – not suitable for people with profound/severe hearing loss.	Provide SMS and email contact routes.
Partially sighted/Blind	
Cut off because suitable means of communication	<p>Ensure written information available in audio and large print where required, or via phone contact.</p> <p>Ensure web based information is compliant with new web accessibility legislation so that it works with screen-readers.</p>