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Our Health & Safety provisions COVID-19

A message from our CEOs updated December 2020

The health and safety of our colleagues is extremely important to us. All employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, they protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

During this unprecedented time, COVID-19 has forced us to review and change the way in which we work in order to continue delivering services that deaf people need, whilst ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues.

Deaf people still need access to advice, information (including COVID-19 related), communication, wellbeing services and support to continue living independently. This cannot stop – in some ways the pandemic has only increased the need for services, particularly information and advice where unsurprisingly we have seen an increase in demand.

What have we done?

- Continually worked with colleagues across the organisation to assess and review our working practices. Our Co-CEO and Health & Safety representative leads a working group that includes representatives from all areas of our organisation
- Reviewed government guidance as it changes and provided BSL updates internally and externally
- Worked collaboratively with other charities to discuss challenges, adaptations and communications
- Provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) along with government guidance including fitting/removal instructions
- Updated our standard risk assessment tools to include additional risks and control measures associated with COVID-19
- Reviewed and updated our employee privacy notice
- Enabled effective home working for colleagues and conducted supervisions and team catch-ups/meetings remotely
- Maintained open channels of communication with our board of trustees; providing pandemic related updates through our reporting processes and video meetings
- Engaged with our local authority partners to ensure the continued safety of our clients
- Introduced a live-chat feature on our website that includes video access
- Adapted the way in which we deliver services, including:
 - Remote access (video-call, live-chat, email, SMS, Skype)
 - Doorstep welfare checks
 - Shop-drops, including medications
 - Social distancing where we cannot deliver a service remotely or via a doorstep service
- Established a new, open channel of communication by encouraging colleagues to ask their CEOs a question, no matter what that the topic
- Prepared guidance for colleagues to provide additional safety measures associated with COVID-19 needed to ensure safe working

- Displayed the “staying COVID-19 secure in 2020” poster to confirm we have made our workplace COVID secure
- Published our COVID-19 risk assessment measures on our website
- Prepared a “business as usual statement” to share with our funders
- Asked colleagues to confirm their preferences in relation to travel and attending meetings
- Provided additional online coronavirus awareness training for all colleagues
- Continued to review the need for face-to-face service provision in line with the government’s changing guidance and the requirements of our funders

Some of the people who we support rely on our services. They have nobody else and no one to turn to at this incredibly worrying time. Our job as a charity is to do all that we can to ensure services continue, whilst ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues. It is not easy – but we are doing our best.

Amanda, Lesley and Sue - Joint Chief Executives