

Dear, \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am a member of your constituency and my  
address is

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I am writing to you today to ask for your support as my parliamentary representative, and to ask that you share my concerns with your colleagues.

The Covid-19 pandemic has irrevocably changed many of the things that we take for granted in the UK. One of them has been the ways that we are able to access our health care providers.

At the start of the pandemic, phone consultations were introduced as a way of limiting the spread of Covid-19. This was inaccessible to many Deaf people, leaving them without access to even the most basic healthcare during a national health crisis.

SignHealth, the UK's only specialist Deaf health charity, recognised that the Deaf community were disproportionately affected and decided to set up 'BSL Health Access', a Video Relay Service that provides 24/7 access to Sign Language Interpreters so that Deaf people can talk to their health providers instantly, and at the point of need. This service has removed barriers and saved many lives.

However, as it now stands, NHS England funding for BSL Health Access will run out at the end of March 2021, with no guarantee of it being renewed. This will result in the closure of a vital service that has proven itself necessary over the past year, effectively removing barriers to healthcare for the Deaf community.

As a member of your constituency, can I please ask you to show your support and help to ensure that NHS England continues funding this essential service beyond March 31?

There are many benefits to continuing this service. It will enable Deaf people to independently contact their GPs, dental services and hospitals. Where interpreters are unable to attend in person, due to social distancing restrictions, that service can be provided online and is available 24/7, meaning that Deaf people will continue to have equitable access to emergency care. It is also an important tool for health care professionals and can be used to assist paramedics called to people's homes, as well as those who are delivering end of life care in hospices. This is particularly relevant with the roll out of the UK's largest ever vaccine deployment programme; due to the mandatory need for staff to wear PPE, the BSL Health Access app has helped providers to deliver specific instructions at COVID-19 testing sites and increasingly at vaccination centres too.

The closure of BSL Health Access is devastating for those who have relied on the service, both personally and professionally, throughout the pandemic.

For more information please visit - <https://signhealth.org.uk/.../no-money-bsl-health-access.../> or view SignHealth's petition here <http://chnq.it/TcpptqgSLT>