

East of England Citizens Senate Introduction to Sensory Awareness



Who are we?

Our diverse team is made up of nearly 40 highly skilled, multi-talented, experienced sensory specialists delivering empowering services across East Anglia and beyond.

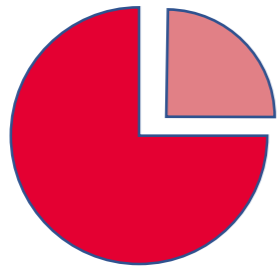


What do we do?

- ECL Sensory Service is dedicated to improving peoples' independence and access to society.
- We walk alongside people through what is often a difficult and emotional journey grieving and adjusting to loss, and fear of the future. We support them to gain the skills and confidence to move forward. We do this using the training and experience of our team; equipment such as white canes and pager systems; and the brilliant services provided by a range of partners.
- We are focussed on the individual and their family but we also know that unless we support our wider society to become more accessible, the people we are working with will likely not be able to live the life they want.
- It's all in the design. At best, the design of services can be life changing for individuals and the community. At worst it can be deadly.
- The more inaccessible the initial service design, however accidental – the more costly it can be to put right. And the cost in terms of impact of peoples health and wellbeing is incalculable.
- We would much rather meet with commissioners, designers and even architects, than try to tackle issues when a provider is commissioned or a build finished, and the money spent.
- We want to help everyone get it right first time.

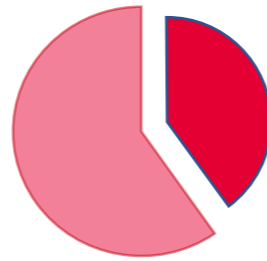
Hearing Loss – Facts & Figures

**One in six people in the UK
have a hearing loss**



70%

Of over 70's
have some
form of hearing
loss.



40%

Of over 50's
have some
form of
hearing loss.

- **30%** of the spoken word can be seen on the lips.
- Lip reading is therefore only 30% accurate.
- Approximately 75% of care home residents have hearing problems.

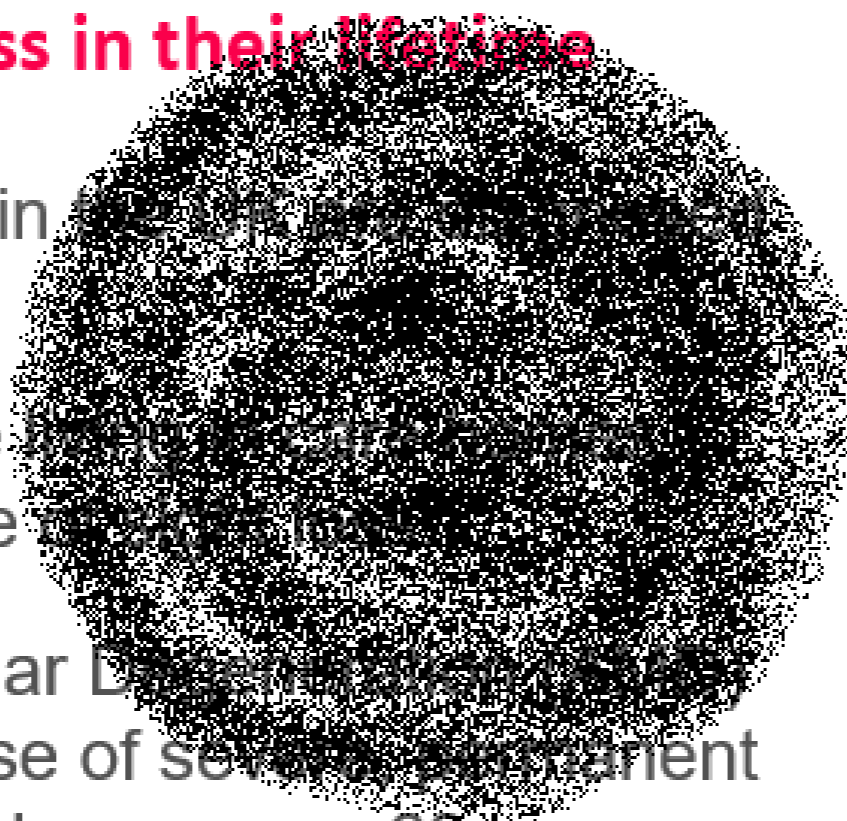
On average, it takes people 10 years to address their hearing loss.

Sightloss – Facts & Figures

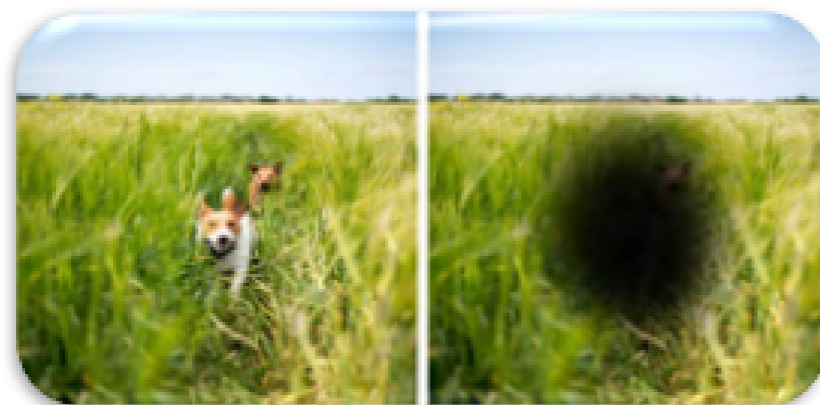
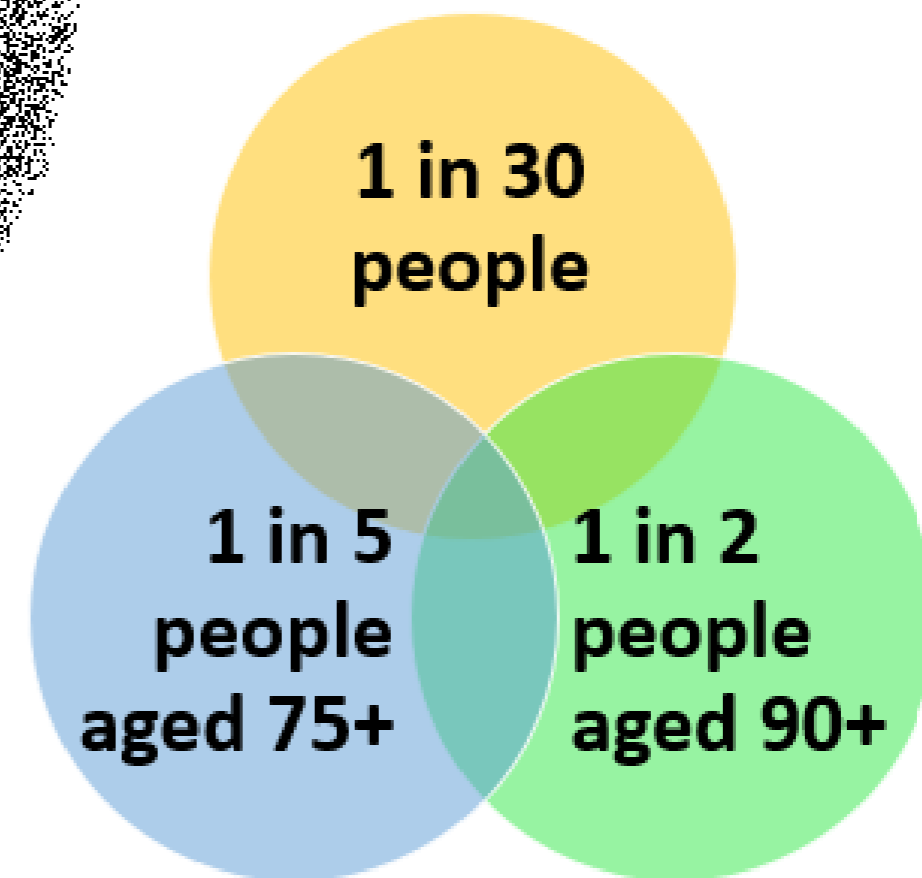
One in every five people will start to live with sight loss in their lifetime



- ♥ **250** people a day in the UK start to live with a sight loss.
- ♥ One in two people aged 75+ have some degree of sight loss.
- ♥ Age related Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of severe and permanent vision loss in people over age 60.



Number of people living with Sight Loss



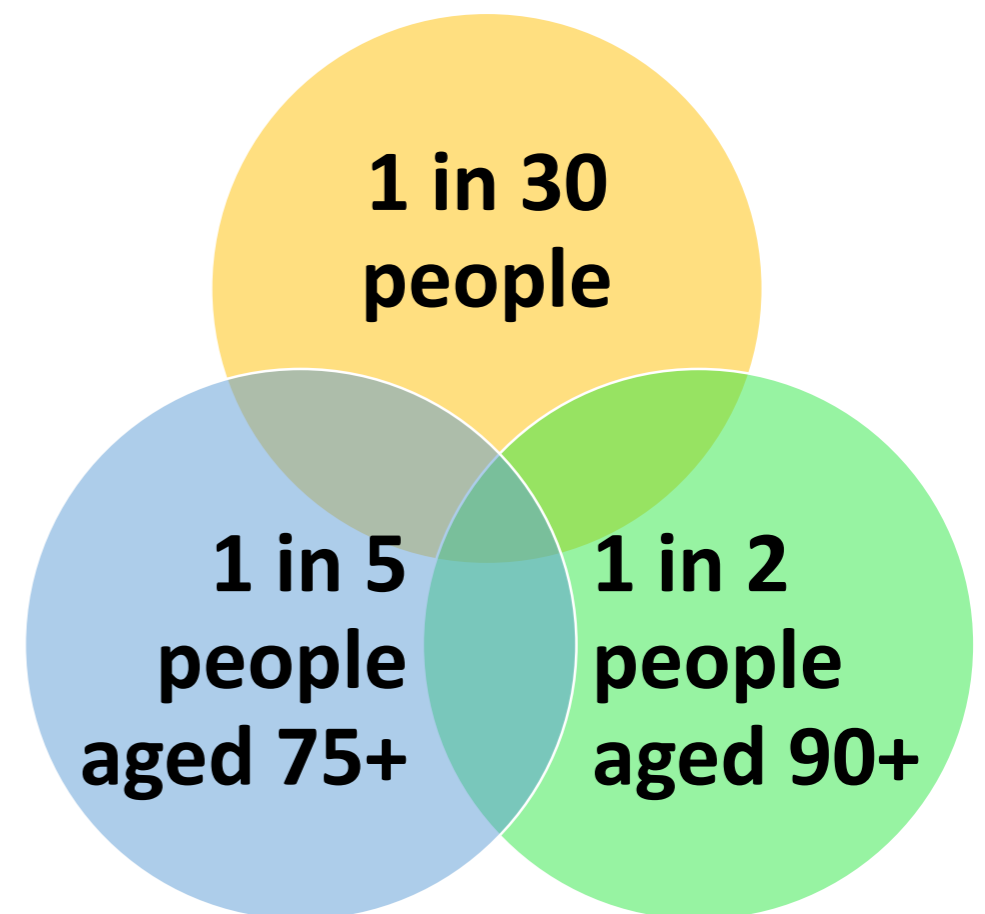
Sightloss – Facts & Figures

One in every five people will start to live with sight loss in their lifetime



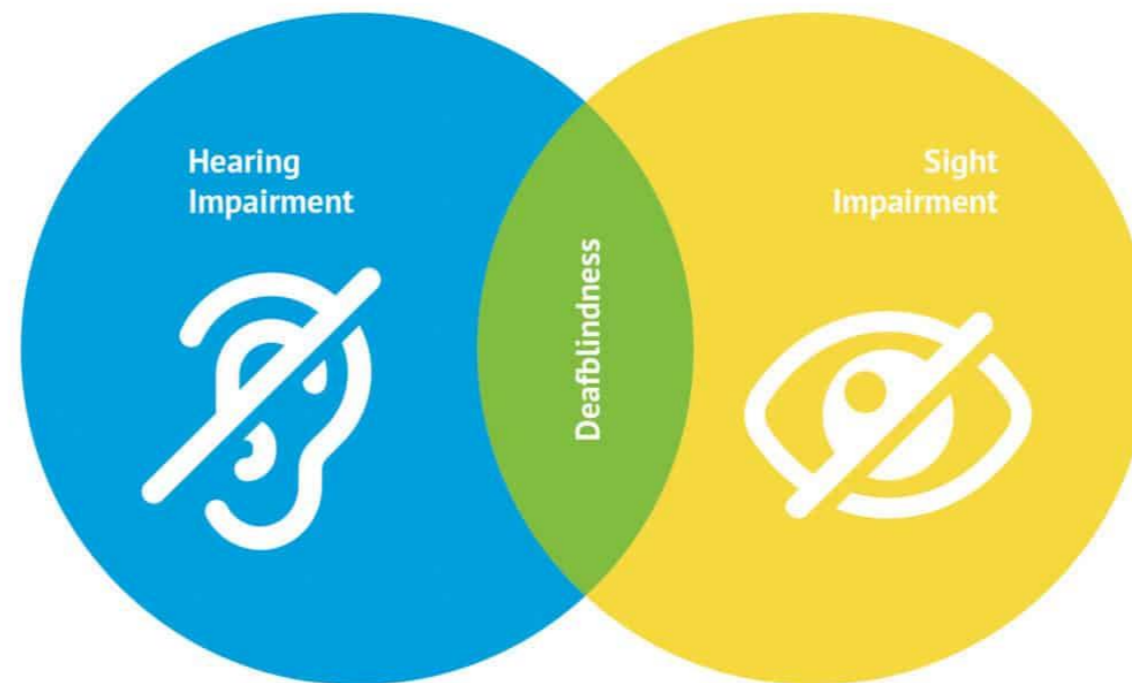
- ♥ **250** people a day in the UK are diagnosed with a sight loss.
- ♥ One in two people living in care homes have some degree of sight loss.
- ♥ Age related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of severe, permanent vision loss in people over age 60.

Number of people living with Sight Loss



Deafblindness (dual sensory)

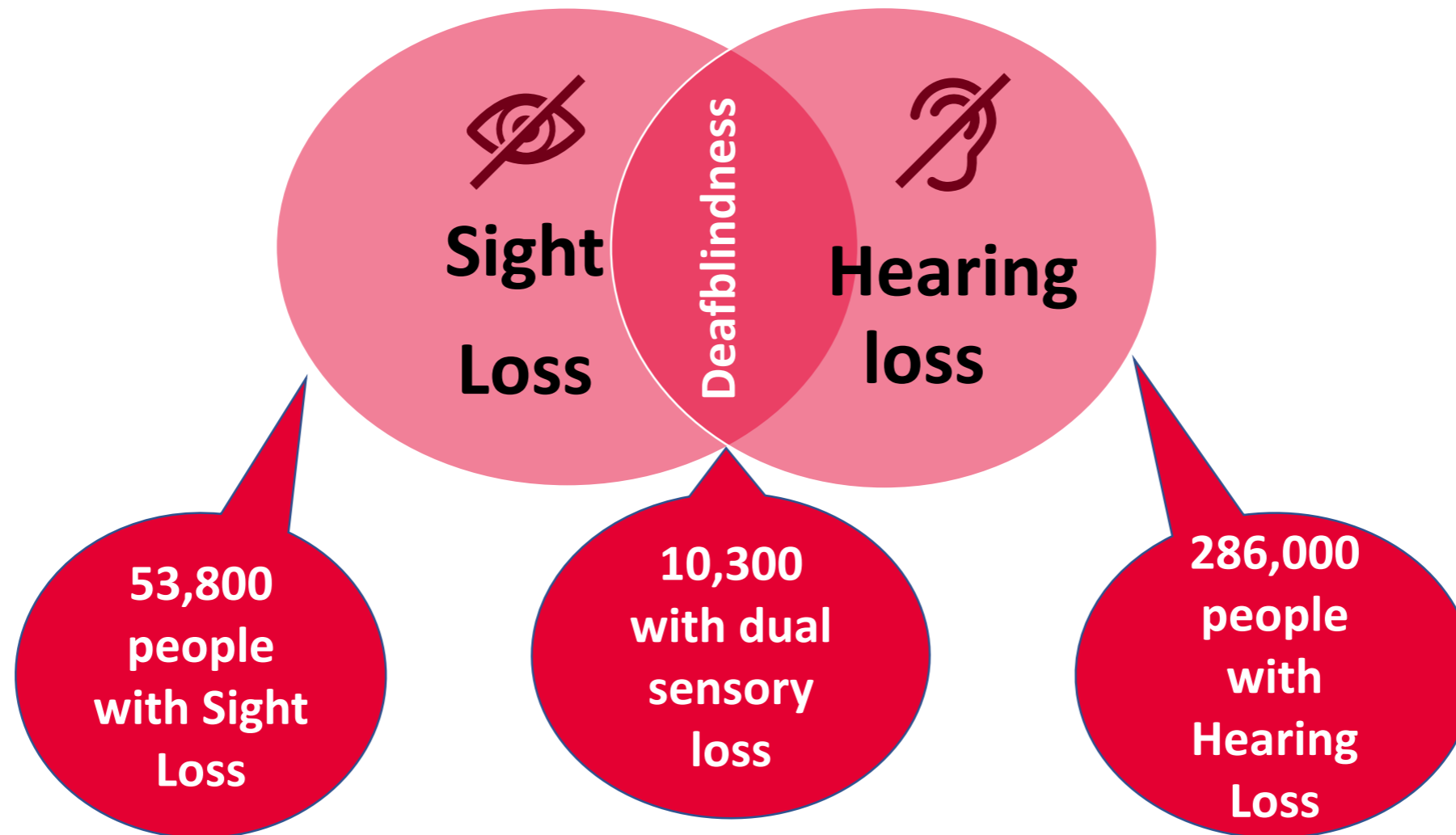
A person is regarded as deafblind if their combined sight and hearing impairment causes difficulties with communication, access to information and mobility. This includes people with a progressive sight and hearing loss.



Deafblindness is recognised as a unique disability in its own right.

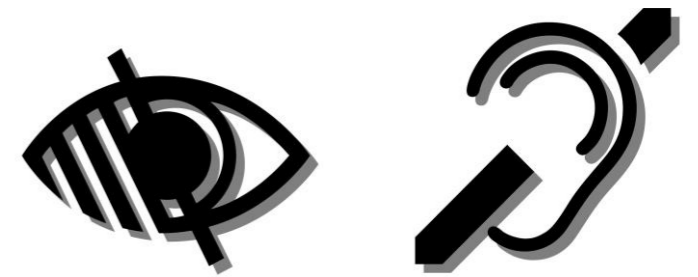
It doesn't necessarily mean a person is totally deaf or totally blind as most individuals who are deafblind have some residual sight and/or hearing.

Demographics



Essex has the largest number of people with sensory loss per population than any county in the UK.

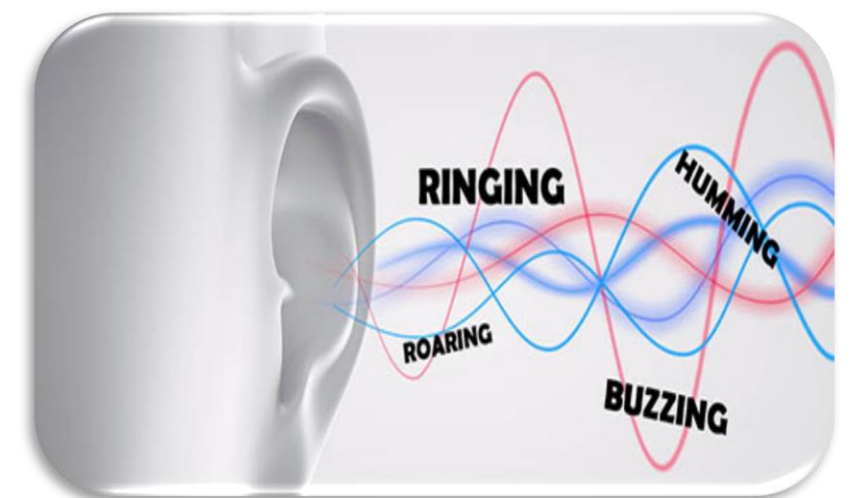
High risk of misdiagnosis



Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) causes a person whose vision has started to deteriorate to see hallucinations. According to the Macular Society, up to half of all people with macular degeneration may experience CBS hallucinations at some time. CBS is frequently misdiagnosed as dementia or mental illness.



Musical ear syndrome (MES) is a condition that causes people with hearing impairment to have non-psychiatric auditory hallucinations. In advanced age, it could be confused with dementia.



Wider health implications – dementia, mental health & falls



Mental health

Hearing loss can lead to withdrawal from social situations, emotional distress, and depression. Research shows that it increases the risk of loneliness, but mainly for those who don't wear hearing aids. People with vision impairment have an increased risk of depression.

Falls

People with sight loss are **twice as likely to fall** and be injured than sighted people.

People with hearing loss are **3 x more likely to fall**. Even a mild degree of hearing loss triples the risk of an accidental fall. This risk increases by 140 percent for every additional 10 decibels of hearing loss.

Dementia

Hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia **up to five times**, but evidence also suggests that hearing aids may reduce these risks.



There is limited awareness and understanding of hearing and sight loss in key areas:

- Identification of sensory loss, and misdiagnosis.
- Impact on quality of life.
- Wider health implications such as dementia, falls & mental health.
- The challenges and benefits of hearing aids.
- Hearing aid basic maintenance, and the use of loop systems.
- Communication tactics.
- The importance of colour contrast.
- Accessible staff.
- Accessible information.
- Accessible buildings.



Accessible Information Standard

Making health and social care information accessible- updated 2022

From August 2016 all organisations that provide NHS care and / or publicly-funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard.

The Standard sets out a specific, consistent approach to meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

It covers the needs of people who are deaf/Deaf, blind, or deafblind, or who have a learning disability. This includes interpretation or translation for people whose first language is British Sign Language. It does not cover these needs for other languages.

Our AIS toolkit is designed to support and make it an easier read step by step:



<https://www.ecl.org/services/sensory-service/accessible-information-standard-toolkit>

Top tips

Sensory ~~impaired~~ 
Empowered

1. Review your organisations Equality and Diversity policies to ensure they are representative of all disability groups.
2. Reflect the people you are there to serve in your workforce through positive recruitment.
3. Look to the local and national Voluntary sector for support with meaningful engagement. And ensure you have representation from all groups: Visual impairment, hard of hearing, Deaf and deafblind.
4. Ensure all public engagement activity is as accessible as possible so that people with sight and / or hearing loss can be meaningfully involved. Online, hard copies and face to face options should be available and widely advertised in various formats.

Top tips continued

Sensory ~~impaired~~
Empowered 

5. Consider the accessibility of face to face engagement: Make sure venues have:

- Clear, large print directional signage inside and outside.
- Are as easy to find within a building as possible.
- Are appropriately welcoming of assistance dogs.
- Quiet areas away from background noise and echoing acoustics.
- Provision for British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting for Deaf people either in person, or digitally.
- Clear, concise, and appropriate information provided to visitors.
- Staff are aware to remove masks to facilitate lip reading where possible.

4. If engaging via another Access Group or organisation check that it is representative of all disability groups, and if any are missing then flag this to them, and if necessary search out additional alternative routes to engagement.

Hearing Loss - Communication

Masks present a significant barrier to lipreading, as do full beards, pen nibbling, and not being face to face with your face in full light.

Online meetings offer the opportunity to use transcription. But this is not a failsafe fix. These excerpts are copied from one meeting I attended recently:



Is that possible to like quantify in a ways like percentage, last time, five hours, 9 status sex like?

Yeah, because of Red Bridge and all that comes under the blonde business, so.

At least you at least four or five game or but it looks like significantly more than that.

I rhymed the quality of the type of need the paper, so the quality of files type needs people have. So we talked a little bit about the

ECL Sensory Champion training

CPD accredited (4 points)



Sensory Champion Training – online or in person

Our Lived Experience training covers sight loss, hearing loss, deafness and deafblindness and is aimed at giving staff the skills and confidence to effectively support people with a sensory loss.

Email sensorychampions@essexcares.org for information

Sensory Action Alliance

The Sensory Action Alliance has been formed to bring together different organisations across all sectors who will make two pledges to improve access to their services.

Joining organisations are celebrated across our social media and published on our website enabling us to shine a spotlight on good practice and improved access outcomes.



Thank you for your time and
attention

Any questions?



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