

# Shaping the future of deaf mental health

## Key findings

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1. There are unfair and avoidable differences between the mental health services available to deaf and hearing people. Deaf people do not receive equitable healthcare.
2. Mental health related self-help resources are not readily available in British Sign Language.
3. There is a lack of consistent, accessible early intervention services for deaf people, across all ages.
4. There is a lack of consistent and universally available community specialist provision for deaf adults across England and not enough deaf specialists.
5. Deaf people are unable to access community mental health teams, resulting in:
  - a. many deaf people remaining in secure provision or inpatient care without ability for discharge,
  - b. high attrition rates with deaf people not attending appointments, or dropping out of the support system due to barrier fatigue,
  - c. referrals to higher tier support at a later stage after symptoms have escalated due to not receiving support needed earlier.
6. There are inconsistent and disjointed referral pathways with gaps in planning across deaf services for people who use BSL and those who have language deprivation / delays.
7. Poor deaf awareness and cultural competency is evident across the NHS resulting in incorrect referrals and misdiagnoses among deaf patients.
8. The communication needs of people who are deaf are being neglected.