

The Impact of Face Masks on Communication

There are 12 million people with hearing loss across UK.



1 in 6 people is living with a hearing impairment.

Many of these people rely on using their residual hearing (with or without a hearing aid) and lip reading to be able to communicate effectively.

Since the Corona Virus, the introduction of face masks have had a debilitating effect on the hearing impaired population.



These masks block faces and prevent our ability to see facial expressions, read lips, and connect.

**Masks + Blocked face
= Increased Miscommunication**

How to support patients with hearing loss?

- Identify which patient has a hearing loss and ensure a plan is put in place on how you are going to communicate with them.
- If available, wear a see through surgical mask
- Write things down – use a mini white board that can be wiped clean.
- For patients that can use their residual hearing, ensure the environment is quiet, speak loudly and clearly.
- If the patient is a hearing aid user, ensure they are wearing their hearing aid and the battery is working.
- Use gestures and sign language.
- Use apps such as Google Live Transcribe or Otter which convert speech to text on a tablet or smart phone or 'Now Interpreter' where you can access a BSL interpreter for free for patients who use BSL.
- Use video calls – staff member can go to a space where they can safely remove their mask and talk to the patient via video calls.