



Inclusive Communication Checklist

A practical pre-contact, appointment and follow-up checklist for accessible engagement with Deaf parents.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

Schools, healthcare and public services

A practical professional resource to support respectful, individualised practice with Children of Deaf Adults and their families. CODA identity is not itself a diagnosis, deficit, safeguarding indicator or support need.

SCOPE AND STATUS

This is general professional guidance, not legal advice, a statutory procedure or a substitute for local safeguarding policies. Duties differ across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. Verify local requirements before applying this resource.

Before contact: access needs

A short accessible-contact workflow should begin before the appointment. Record the person's own preferred language and format; never ask the child to supply this on their behalf.

- ☐ Ask each adult how they prefer to communicate.
- ☐ Confirm BSL, ISL, speech-to-text, written or other needs without assumption.
- ☐ Confirm who books qualified interpreting and contingency options.
- ☐ Provide accessible invitations, agendas and venue/online information.

At the appointment

Make the meeting usable, respectful and confidential. Address Deaf adults directly, not through a child. Offer an explanation of interpreter roles and ask whether the format is working.

- ☐ Confirm interpreting/technical access is effective.
- ☐ Speak directly to the parent or service user.
- ☐ Allow appropriate processing time and clarification.
- ☐ Ensure privacy, including for safeguarding and clinical topics.
- ☐ Do not rely on a child for important adult communication.

After the appointment

Accessibility must continue after the interpreter leaves. Actions, letters, consent materials and appeals must be available in a usable format.

- ☐ Send a clear summary in the agreed accessible format.
- ☐ Identify named follow-up contacts and deadlines.
- ☐ Provide an accessible route to ask questions or complain.
- ☐ Record barriers and improvements needed.

Emergency and failure planning

Time-critical situations require a trained response. Services should know their approved remote options, when to pause non-urgent activity and how to document an unavoidable exception.

- ☐ Front-line teams know the emergency access process.
- ☐ No default reliance on children as interpreters.
- ☐ Any urgent limitation is documented with rationale and corrective action.

Manager sign-off and audit

Use the following prompts in supervision or quality assurance. Repeat sampling periodically and after any access failure.

- Who owns the interpreter booking process?
- Could a Deaf parent attend an unplanned meeting fairly?
- Can we show accessibility was provided for consent and complaints?
- Has anyone had to use a child to interpret? What was changed?

REVIEW RECORD

Service / team: _____ Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____
 Improvement actions and due dates: _____

Professional references and further reading

Equality Act 2010 / reasonable adjustment guidance (Great Britain) — <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty/reasonable-adjustments-a-legal-duty>

NHS England, Accessible Information Standard (2025 revision) — <https://www.england.nhs.uk/accessible-information-standard/>

Irish Sign Language Act 2017, sections 3, 6 and 7 (Ireland) — <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/act/40/enacted/en/html>

PUBLICATION REVIEW NOTE

For public publication, arrange review by suitably experienced Deaf community representatives, CODAs and the relevant education, clinical or safeguarding leads. Re-check current law, policy and organisational procedures at the time of use.