

SILENT VOICES

Impact Report

2019-2026



This page is intentionally blank

Introduction

Silent Voices is a long-standing engagement initiative that has been hosted by Healthwatch Salford since 2019. The project brought together d/Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users on a bi-monthly basis to identify and address key issues affecting their experiences with health and care services. Initially commissioned by the Salford Clinical Commissioning Group and then supported by NHS Greater Manchester, the project aimed to empower the d/Deaf community and influenced meaningful improvements in service accessibility and quality.

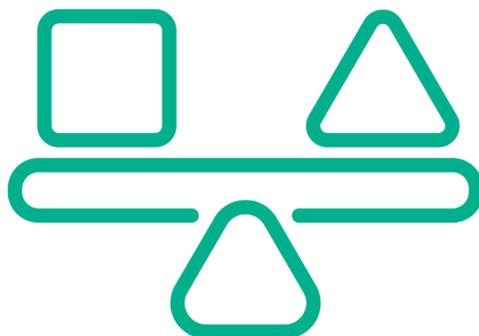


Greater Manchester

healthwatch
Salford

Key Achievements

- **Awareness Raising:** Developed a series of 'Top Tips' videos to educate health and care professionals on d/Deaf awareness and communication best practices.
- **Improved Access to Services:** Played a pivotal role in the commissioning of a BSL relay service, enabling better access to GP practices, pharmacies, and opticians in Salford.
- **Inclusive Feedback Mechanisms:** Supported the creation of a BSL video portal where individuals can share their experiences or submit complaints in their preferred language.
- **Community Engagement:** Organised a d/Deaf drop-in event, providing a platform for community members to voice their views directly to health and care providers.
- **Toolkit Development** – Silent Voices developed a toolkit for NHS Greater Manchester's Communications and engagement team to support them to engage and communicate with the d/Deaf community in a meaningful way and to make their comms and engagement activity more accessible to their community.



Collaboration

The collaboration between Silent Voices and the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) has played a vital role in shaping the d/Deaf Strategy. By actively incorporating feedback from service users, the NCA has identified key areas for improvement and gained meaningful insights through personal experiences. This has helped colleagues develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the d/Deaf community.



Impact

As a result of the Silent Voices group, the Northern Care Alliance has introduced several enhanced methods for d/Deaf patients to connect with its services, including:

- A BSL text reply service within interpretation and translation, allowing patients to check interpreter bookings independently.
- A BSL text reply service for PALS.
- A direct email for appointment queries:
dDeaf.Appointments@nca.nhs.uk.
- Guides for staff on how to best support d/Deaf patients in clinics, wards, and emergency care.
- Ongoing work to improve access to induction loops.
- The reintroduction of the Communication Needs Passport, with messaging on the importance of 'ask, listen, do.'
- Pictorial resources are now available in all care areas.
- Clear window masks made accessible.
- A business case for SignLive, which is currently in progress.

- Updated interpretation and translation guidance, ensuring staff follow best practices.
- Improvements to special needs coding on patient systems, supported by training.
- New training packages are in development and promoted where possible, though not yet mandatory.
- A 20 BSL healthcare signs video, introduced as part of the training alongside a member from Silent Voices and the executive team.
- A staff intranet, providing resources and support information.
- A new page on the main website for service users to access relevant information and resources will soon follow.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the Silent Voices group members, who have been involved over the years and have played an important part in bringing about positive change and service improvement.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of our late, much-missed colleague Mark Lupton, who died in August 2025. Mark played a pivotal role in setting up the group in 2019 and led on delivering the positive changes and outcomes throughout this time. Mark was passionate about service improvement, patient experience and ensured everyone's voices were heard.



Going forwards

Whilst the Silent Voices group will end in March 2026, Healthwatch Salford continue to be there for the d/Deaf community, championing their experiences of health and care in Salford.

In 2022 we set up a page on our website for the d/Deaf community to share their experiences with us in BSL (British Sign Language).

It can be shared in one of the following ways:

- Record your video in BSL and send it to us through text message or WhatsApp to: **07410 411559**
- Send us a text message or WhatsApp to: **07410 411559**
- Send us an email to: **info@healthwatchsalford.co.uk**
- Or complete the Feedback form on our website.





This page is intetionally blank.

healthwatch
Salford

0161 960 0316

info@healthwatchsalford.co.uk

www.healthwatchsalford.co.uk