**Complaint letter:**

**BSL interpreter or other communication support was not provided – public functions**

To: Name of the public body

Address

Also by email

From: your name

Address:

Phone:

Email

Date:

Dear [name of the public body]

**Re: Complaint about disability discrimination – the Equality Act 2010**

**This is an official complaint and I want it to be registered and investigated in accordance with your complaints procedure.**

I am writing this letter of complaint because you failed to provide communication support to enable me communicate with you effectively. I would like you communicate with Deaf and Disabled people in an accessible way. I believe I was discriminated against and you are in breach of the Equality Act 2010. This letter explains what went wrong and what I want you to do to make things right.

**I am a Disabled person under the Equality Act 2010**

I am a Disabled person within the meaning of Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

[Describe your impairment and the impact it has on you), for example: I am Deaf, I use British Sign Language to communicate.]

[Give more details about the communication support you needed.

For example: British Sign Language (BSL) is the preferred language of over 87,000 Deaf people in the UK for whom English may be a second or third language. You can find out more about BSL here  <https://bda.org.uk/help-resources/#BSL>

BSL interpreting is provided by qualified interpreters, who must be registered. See this website for the list <https://www.nrcpd.org.uk/>]

**The issue I am complaining about**

[Give details of what happened, with date, time, place

For example: Your officer (name and position) contacted me on X date wanting to ask me questions via email. I responded saying that I struggle to understand complex written information and to explain myself in writing as my first language is BSL. I asked if I could have an appointment with BSL interpreter present instead.]

[Describe what exactly went wrong. For example: Your officer ignored my requests and kept sending me questions via email and insisting I respond to them.]

[Describe the impact this had on you, including not understanding what is going on, not being able to make your case, wasting time, feeling humiliated, any financial impact, were your choices restricted.

For example: I was upset and stressed out. I was unable to put my case across and was put under immense pressure, which was not fair. This affected my confidence and emotional health.]

[Describe whether this situation happens regularly. ]

**How you breached the Equality Act 2010**

You are a public body exercising a public function under Section 29 of the Equality Act 2010. Section 15 of the Equality Act says you must not discriminate against Disabled people because of something arising as a consequence of their disability.

Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 requires you to take such steps as it is reasonable to ensure Deaf and Disabled people like me are not put at a disadvantage. Those steps should include: changing policies or the way you work, altering a physical feature or providing an auxiliary aid or service. Communication support, such as BSL interpreter is an auxiliary aid or service.

I made it clear to you that in order for me to communicate with you effectively I need BSL interpreter. This has not been provided. I believe I was discriminated against because I am a BSL user, which is something connected to my disability.

I believe it is reasonable for you make an exception to your standard practice of communicating via email and arranging an appointment with me to enable me to put my case to your through a BSL interpreter. By failing to do this you failed to comply with your duties under the Equality Act 2010.

**Obtaining information**

Please provide me with the following information about the incident that I am complaining about

* Any letters or emails where my request for a meeting with an interpreter has been discussed;
* Details of any policies you have in respect of provision of communication support, including BSL interpreters.

**What I would like to achieve by this complaint**

1. A written apology;
2. A commitment from you to change you policies and the way you work ensuring Deaf people who need to communicate via a BSL interpreter are provided with this support;
3. A commitment from you to train your staff in Disability Equality and their duties under the Equality Act.
4. Compensation for the discrimination and injury to feelings that I experienced.

**Next Actions**

I very much hope we can resolve this matter amicably. I look forward to hearing from you within the next 21 days. If you believe you have not breached the Equality Act 2010, please give your reasons.

I am happy to discuss with you alternative ways to resolve this dispute, however, if I do not hear from you, or if you deny that you are in breach of the Equality Act then I will consider taking legal action against you.

Yours sincerely