**Complaint letter
No reasonable adjustments at the public engagement meeting or an open meeting of a decision-making body, such as council.**

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, I would like it to be registered and investigated under your complaints procedure.

I am writing this letter of complaint because you did not make adjustments which would have enabled me to attend the meeting you held on the [insert Date] to [insert the purpose of the meeting]. I would like you ensure you meet the needs of Disabled people, when exercising your functions. I believe 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. It is impossible for me to understand spoken language without communication support.]

[Describe the adjustment you needed to attend the meeting and participate in it. For example: British Sign Language is my first language and to communicate with hearing people or understand what is being said I need a BSL interpreter.]

**The issue I am complaining about**

[Give details of what happened, when and where. For example: “On X date I wanted to attend an open meeting of the full council where the decision was made about changes to social care support for Disabled people. I wanted to ask a question at that meeting about the impact of changes on Deaf people.”]

[Describe exactly what went wrong. For example: “On X date I contacted the local authority to let them know that I would like to attend the meeting and to ask whether BSL interpreter would be present. Just few days before the meeting I was informed that the BSL interpreter would not be provided.”]

[Describe the impact this had on you, including inconvenience, feeling humiliated, any financial impact, were you unable to understand information and act upon it? Were you unable to express your views? For example: “I felt angry, as I was excluded from attending an important meeting which can have a huge impact on many Deaf people. I was unable to put my views across and I was unable to understand what exactly has been discussed at the meeting.”]

[Describe whether this situation happens regularly.]

**How you breached the Equality Act 2010**

You are a public body exercising public functions 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, when you exercise a public function.

Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 requires you to take such steps as it is reasonable to ensure Disabled people like me can take part in decision-making and engage with you effectively like everybody else. Those steps should include: changing policies or the way you operate, altering a physical feature or providing an auxiliary aid or service. BSL interpreter is an auxiliary service.

I made it clear to you that in order for me to attend the meeting I would need a BSL interpreter. I gave you sufficient notice and I do not see how it was not possible to book an interpreter. I also would like to remind you that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory. You knew that the decision made at that meeting would have a significant impact on many Deaf and Disabled people’s lives, therefore it was reasonable to anticipate that many of us would want to attend it.

I also believe the practice of not providing communication support for such important public meetings puts Deaf people like me at a significant disadvantage as we are effectively excluded from those meetings. I do not see how there could be a reasonable justification for this, especially when it comes to meetings which could have an impact on our day-to-day lives.

By failing to ensure BSL interpreter is present at the meeting you failed to make reasonable adjustments for me and therefore discriminated against me.

**Obtaining information**

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

* Any letters or emails relating to the incident; in particular any correspondence between council officers and the interpreting agencies.
* Details of any policies you have in respect of provision of communication support at public meetings.

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

1. A written apology;
2. A change in your policies and procedures ensuring Disabled people can get communication support to attend public meetings
3. A commitment from you to train your staff in Disability Equality and their duties under the Equality Act 2010.
4. Compensation for the discrimination and injury to feelings that I experienced.

**Next steps**

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 other 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