

Celebration of Deafblind Guidance reissue

Sense held a Parliamentary reception to celebrate the Deafblind Guidance reissue, to raise awareness amongst Parliamentarians and to encourage them to urge their Local Authorities to comply with the Guidance.

Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and Phil Hope MP, Care Services Minister both spoke at the event. Other parliamentarians including ministers, shadow ministers, and Peers came along to show their support. [Watch a video interview with Ed Balls.](#)

Deafblind people and their families also attended with Daniel Patrick giving a speech. Tom Levitt MP hosted the event and even ended his speech with a message in both BSL and deafblind manual!

The Campaigns and Public Policy Team at Sense fought long and hard to get the Guidance reissued, which could affect an estimated 193,000 deafblind people in England. Originally introduced in 2001, the Guidance places a number of legal duties on Local Authorities including identifying deafblind people and providing appropriate services.

Sense surveys from 2001 to the present have shown that in the five years to 2006, the number of deafblind people known to their Local Authority has doubled. The number provided with a communicator guide increased by 40%. However, when the guidance expired in the year 2006–2007, there was an 8% drop in the number of people provided with a communicator guide. It is hoped that the reissue will ensure that services improve permanently as this time the guidance has been issued without an expiry date.

Deafblind young person, Daniel Patrick illustrated the importance of the Guidance and explained how support has changed his life:

“After college I wanted to have a communicator guide, to support me every week at home. I felt isolated and frustrated because there was not enough support for me to go out a lot and my health deteriorated for a while. I believe it was depression. My life has changed since getting this support. I have become more confident, so I am making efforts to become more independent... I go shopping, visit the park, have lunch out, do some day trips and go for walks. I also went to New York for a week with my friend... I also have support for my voluntary work, making mosaics.”

View photos from the event

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sensecharity/sets/72157620859334370>

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