

Transcript for British Sign Language videos

Video 1: Video relay for 999 emergencies

This video has been made by Ofcom. Ofcom is the regulator for communications services such as broadband, home phone and mobile services, as well as TV, radio and the postal service.

Ofcom is proposing a new service to make it easier for deaf British Sign Language users to contact the emergency services.

Charities representing deaf people in the UK have been campaigning for Deaf BSL users to have better access to the police, ambulance, fire and coastguard when they are in an emergency. The charities told us that text relay and emergency SMS are not good solutions for Deaf BSL users, because they require callers to read and write in English.

Deaf people want to be able to use their first language in an emergency. This will make calls faster and more accurate - better for Deaf people and for the emergency services.

We are proposing to introduce emergency video relay for 999 in the UK. We have published a consultation, asking people what they think about this.

The emergency video relay service will need to be approved to make sure it meets people's emergency communication needs.

We want to hear from deaf BSL users about what they think of this proposal. To respond in BSL:

- Email a short video in BSL to emergencyBSL@ofcom.org.uk
- Upload a video in BSL to YouTube or another hosting site and send the link to emergencyBSL@ofcom.org.uk

We will translate all BSL responses into English and publish them on our website unless you want your response to be confidential.

The UK Council on Deafness has been campaigning for video relay for 999 and has a Facebook group called **BSL access 999 emergency**. It is collecting case studies as evidence in its campaign, so you might also want to upload your video there.

For help sending us your response in BSL, contact us via video relay using this link:

www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/contact-us

Then click on 'use our video relay service' to contact Ofcom in BSL during office hours.

Video 2: How will the service work if it is introduced?

We expect it to work using an app on a smartphone or tablet, or by clicking a link on a website. When you open the app or click on the link, a qualified BSL/English interpreter would appear on screen and interpret your emergency call.

You might have used video relay before to contact an organisation such as your bank or health services such as NHS111. We expect the new system to work in a similar way.

Deaf BSL users who have used video relay to access health services say they have benefited from clearer communication, and also more dignity and privacy from not needing a friend or relative to help with the call. We think people would benefit in the same way from video relay access to 999 services.

What equipment will I need?

You will need a connected device with a camera. This could be a laptop, tablet or smartphone.

Will the emergency services be able to see me?

No. The interpreter will be able to see you and will voice what you say, but the emergency services will have a voice call with the interpreter.

Will I have to pay?

The service will be free to use, although you will need a data connection (such as Wi-Fi or mobile data).

We are proposing that the cost is met by telecoms providers in the UK. We think the benefits to Deaf people and to the emergency services will outweigh the costs, because the service is likely to save people's lives.

Other benefits include:

- More equivalent access for deaf BSL users to the emergency services.
- Increased dignity and peace of mind for Deaf BSL users who know they can use the service in an emergency
- Faster and more accurate emergency calls
- Helping the emergency services to send the right sort of help, because they have better information about the emergency

When might the service start?

We want to give telecoms providers one year to set up the service following a final decision taken next year. After our consultation we will publish a formal statement setting out when the service must start.

Will I need to register?

You will not need to provide any personal data when you download the app. But if you make an emergency call, the emergency services might ask for information such as your name, phone number and the address where the emergency is happening. This is the same as for voice 999 calls.

Video 3: Two stories about Deaf people in 999 emergencies

We talked to a charity called SignHealth, which works to improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. They told us about some Deaf people's experiences in emergencies.

Story 1

“Next door’s house was on fire; I spotted it. Our house alarm then went off so I got my child and husband out of the house. We could not use Minicom because of the ‘get out and stay out’ fire rule, and we could not use mobile phone as video relay was not available then. We went to several houses to try and get someone to call the fire brigade, but most of our neighbours were not at home. Finally, we found a neighbour and he called the fire brigade. Unfortunately, the fire had spread to our house, and it was six months before we could move back in due to extensive damage. I do wonder if things could have been different if I had been able to call the fire brigade sooner.”

Story 2

“I know a Deaf elderly couple. The husband went out to do some errands and came back to find that his wife had collapsed inside the hallway. He could not open the front door and had to wait for his daughter to arrive. He did not seek help because of his deafness and did not know how to use the 999 emergency number. Unfortunately, his wife died.”

These powerful examples show that having access to the emergency services in BSL could make a real difference to people’s lives.

We would be interested to hear about BSL users’ experiences of contacting or trying to contact the emergency services.

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