

## Salford CVS Annual Conference – Note Takers Template

### Justice for Disabled People: The Role of the VCSE Sector in Salford

<b>Name of workshop</b>	Beyond Sight and Sound
<b>Facilitator</b>	Niamh Meehan, Salford CVS
<b>Panel members</b>	Terri Balon, RNIB Philip Bridge, Salford d/Deaf Community Gathering David Haughton, RNID
<b>Panel speaker notes</b>	<p><b>Terri Balon, RNIB (Royal National institute of blind people) covers the North West area. Terri presented access and accessibility issues.</b></p> <p>RNIB conducted research on accessing services and barriers they face, accessing shops was identified as one of the worst areas for accessibility.</p> <p>There are 6 parts main areas which contribute to access 1. Information 2. Health 3. Education 4. Employment 5. Travel &amp; Transport 6. Independence.</p> <p>RNIB have a visible activity employment scheme which they can deliver to employers to help partially sighted people into employment. David spoke about some of the negative encounters people who are blind or visually impaired face and the impacts of these and gave some examples and stories of people with lived experience of this.</p> <p>Terri has worked with GMP to allow people with visible impairments to raise hate incidents.</p> <p><b>Philip Bridge, Salford d/Deaf Community Gathering</b></p> <p>Philip explained his experience of being deaf. Philip was the only person in his family with hearing issues and growing up, he nor his family were offered any deaf specific support from the council. He wasn't supported at school and was often left on his own which meant he spent a lot of time practising art as there was no one available to support him with subjects such as Maths, English, and Science.</p> <p>When Philip was 8 he was appointed a social worker who knew about 2 schools which could support him. Philip went to a residential oral school in Southport where they had to lip read as BSL was not allowed, however the pupils had varying levels of hearing difficulties and the teachers didn't practices techniques that were useful for all students so sometimes Philip still couldn't engage with everything in class.</p> <p>Philip left schools when he was 16 and only received a C grade GCSE in art, he was awarded grades Ds/Es/Fs in all other subjects.</p> <p>Philip moved onto Bolton College where they had a deaf team and it was here he first saw sign. It was during this time he wanted to start applying for jobs which was very difficult, the staff at the job centre didn't know how to support Philip, they couldn't understand what job he would do and Philip wasn't offered any additional support or an interpreter. After some time he was connected up with a Disability</p>

Employment Officer which led to him getting a job as a welder for a period but he had to stop this due to his epilepsy. This meant he was back at job centre and at this point funding had been cut and there were no Disability Employment Officers, the DEA had closed. He was sign posted to Pure Innovation but he was really struggling to find another job. During job club one week Philip helped some deaf people he was translating between different signs. It was from this that Philip was offered some volunteering work at Salford d/Deaf, he has volunteered for 10 years and is now a paid member of staff and the chair.

Philip explained how difficult Covid-19 was for people with hearing issues, people weren't able to have over the phone doctor appointments, people couldn't lip read due to people wearing masks, there was no interpreters on the English news meaning it was harder for people to get the key information. Salford d/Deaf gathering provided support for people through this time, offering shopping deliveries, help booking appointments, they continued their coffee mornings to help with isolation and loneliness however they did see a massive negative impact on deaf people's mental health.

Philip is now part of Healthwatch, he attends different meetings and is passionate about learning about others disabilities in order to understand and support these people appropriately. He wants to be able to empower and support people with disabilities and barriers to be able to support themselves and to become independent.

### **David Haughton, RNID**

David has worked for RNID for 15 years as a development worker. During this session he spoke about age related hearing loss and RNIDs main focus in the next couple of years. He presented statistics on hearing loss and explained what tinnitus was and how there is a link to low mental health.

When people start to lose their hearing due to age it is gradual, you lose sounds gradually and it can take people about 10 years to address the hearing loss. Research shows that one of the biggest modifiable conditions to stopping early on set dementia is to stop hearing loss, as hearing loss is linked to isolation, being lonely and lowering their mental health. Hearing loss needs to be addressed as soon as they become aware of it. Hearing loss is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common disabilities in the UK

David spoke about the impacts of hearing loss. People become isolated, withdrawn, low self-esteem and lack of confidence impacting on their wellbeing and mental health, employment issues and health inequalities.

Communication tips for people who are not deaf or hard of hearing to put into place to make communication easier. Face people you are talking to, rephrase sentences and use plain English, try and reduce background noises, make sure you have peoples full attention, write things down, think about the room layout and offer communication support particularly for BSL users (book trained professionals)

	<p>What's next for RNID – free hearing checks on their website which gives an indication of whether you have hearing loss, if you fail this it is recommended you go to see your GP to see if there is an infection, blockage or refer for a more thorough hearing check. RNID provide letters for people who book to see their GP if they did fail the hearing test which can help explain the situation to the doctor.</p> <p>RNID have a website with support resources.</p> <p>Campaigning to make society a fairer place for people with hearing loss.</p>
<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>	<p>No time for questions, a couple of people thanked the speakers and stressed how it has made them think about the accessibility of their organisations and services.</p> <p>A rep from SUCRC explained to the room that their services are also available for people who are blind and deaf.</p>
<p><b>Practical actions (2-3)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need a space for people with lived experience of hearing and sight impairments to be able to state their opinions and suggestions for services and organisations which can then be shared across the whole sector.</li> <li>2. Offer training for VCSE sector to understand practical ways they can make their services accessible for everyone.</li> </ol>