

The British Academy of Audiology calls for urgent action on face masks for all in hospitals

The British Academy of Audiology (BAA) supports the use of face masks to reduce the spread of Coronavirus. But, face masks **disadvantage** 1 in 6 of the UK population. People with hearing loss rely on lip-reading and facial expressions to communicate.

BAA Board has written to the Health Secretary to ask for urgent action on:

- Agreement that staff, in any department, can remove face masks on video consultations with patients.
- If a patient uses lip-reading anywhere in the NHS, staff can conduct their appointment without a face mask at a 2m distance.
- Provision for NHS staff who are Deaf or have hearing loss? Extra funding for technology such as remote microphones and employer provision of tablets for using speech to text apps? There needs to be fair distribution and accessibility across NHS Trusts.
- Publication of good communication tactics to every hospital staff member.
- Information be provided for the public on good communication tactics.
- Face masks may prevent people from attending hospital appointments. Reduce the anxiety for those with hearing loss and Deafness through sharing good communication tips.
- Assurance is also required that our Audiologists will be able to access adequate PPE.

We urge the government to support of the work of the Clinical Engineering Department at Addenbrookes Hospital and commit to fund the development, testing and production, of a clear panel CE-marked face mask.

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

- The British Academy of Audiology is the largest association of professionals in hearing and balance in the UK. Our membership extends internationally and provides services in both the public and private sector.
- On behalf of its membership, BAA's vision is to provide a clear and strong voice for professionals in audiology and to promote excellence in clinical knowledge and practice.
- The BAA aims to help its members to develop in their professional skills, provide a benchmark for quality and professional standards and promote audiology as an autonomous profession.

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