

**Manifesto 2000 : the right to education ... the right to a secure future ... the right to work ... the right to language ... the right to information ... the right to informed citizenship / British Deaf Association ; sponsored by Granada, the top name in rental.**

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- In 1890, Britain's Deaf Community formed its own organisation to protect Deaf people's interests - The British Deaf Association - the BDA.
- In 1985, the BDA published a Manifesto as part of its campaign to achieve basic social rights for Deaf people.
- Now in 1990, the BDA's Centenary year, a new Manifesto is published.
- Manifesto 2000 proclaims the inalienable right of all Deaf people in Britain to full equality at school and college, in employment, as consumers at home, and as citizens in the community.
- The Deaf Community calls for these rights to be granted by the year 2000 and for legislation to combat discrimination against Deaf people. It invites the hearing community to lend its support.

## The RIGHT to EDUCATION

Deaf children have the same fundamental right to education as all other children.

But this right cannot be achieved unless they also have the right to attend nursery or other pre-school education; the right to choose to be educated in both British Sign Language and English by teachers proficient in both languages; the right to be taught by qualified teachers who are themselves Deaf; and the right to progress to further and higher education, supported by the special services and courses that are needed to ensure equal access.

## The RIGHT to A SECURE FUTURE

Young Deaf people are increasingly being integrated into the hearing world. More of their special schools are being closed and instead they are placed in mainstream schools or in attached special units. One effect of this process is that they lose contact with other Deaf children, with the adult Deaf Community, and with the common language and culture that are part of their heritage.

If young Deaf people are to have a secure future, they must have the right to a place in their own community and in the hearing world. But if this is to be a genuine option, they must be able to meet other Deaf children in schools that cater for their needs. In further and higher education they must have access to Sign Language interpreters. They must have access both to youth clubs and Deaf clubs. And they must have the education and training that give them the life-skills and qualifications to follow the same career opportunities as their hearing peers.

## The RIGHT to WORK

In the competitive and discriminatory world of work, unemployment and under-employment are part of Deaf people's inheritance. Deaf job applicants are less likely to be interviewed or appointed, while those in work are less likely to be given tasks commensurate with their abilities and potential.

Deaf people have the right to the same employment opportunities as hearing people - to the same assessment and vocational training, work experience schemes, careers advice and re-training, promotion opportunities, and participation in trade union and other work-place activities.

If these rights are to be enjoyed, and if Deaf people are to compete on equal terms with their hearing colleagues, they must also have the right of access at the work-place to Sign Language interpreters, as well as to the benefits of the latest technical and communication aids.



**British Deaf  
Association**

## The RIGHT to LANGUAGE

Each nation has its own Sign Language. In the United Kingdom, British Sign Language - BSL - is the fourth most commonly used indigenous language. It is a distinct visual language with its own precise rules and grammar.

As a linguistic minority, Deaf people claim the right to have BSL officially recognised as one of the nation's languages.

The bridge between the Deaf BSL user and the hearing English speaker is the BSL interpreter. In order to cross that bridge, Deaf people must have a right of access to professionally qualified Sign Language interpreters. But there is a critical shortage of trained interpreters and a pressing need for further research into BSL - funding is urgently needed.

## The RIGHT to INFORMATION

**Telephone access** Deaf people have a right to use the telephone system, yet 200,000 of them are unable to use it. The means now exist to remedy this - the Deaf Communicating Terminal - that has a keyboard to type the message and a display strip on which to read it. This gives Deaf people access to the national and international telephone networks.

To make this right a reality, Deaf people now require: i) all local authorities to meet their obligations to provide DCT's; ii) a national emergency number equivalent to the hearing user's '999'.

**Television access** for Deaf people, television is an essential way of getting access to information, education, entertainment and the arts. Being visual, television is ideal for communicating to Deaf people through British Sign Language and sub-titles, yet few programmes use these methods. Deaf viewers call, for the fullest possible access to television through Sign Language and sub-titling. In particular, Deaf viewers call for access to the main daily news bulletin and to televised broadcasts from Parliament.

## The RIGHT to INFORMED CITIZENSHIP

Deaf people, like other citizens, have a right to be informed and to take part in the political life of the country. Yet they are denied these rights. Political information on television is not broadcast in Sign Language. Party conferences and election broadcasts remain unheard. Local political meetings rarely include Sign Language interpreters. Deaf people are, in effect, disenfranchised. Through this Manifesto, Deaf people now call for their enfranchisement through effective communication to them both in the visual media and in their constituencies; and urge that they be consulted about the provision of local health, education and social services.

While hearing citizens receive information from government and other sources through leaflets, advertisements, and posters, this is largely inaccessible to Deaf people. They now claim their right to receive such information in their own language on video.

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