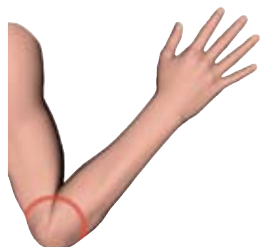


The Hospital Communication Book



Helping to make sure people who have difficulties understanding and / or communicating get an equal service in hospital

The book contains useful information about why people may have difficulties understanding or communicating. It has useful tips you can use to improve communication, and pages of pictures you can use to help you communicate.



Using Pictures



Visual Impairment



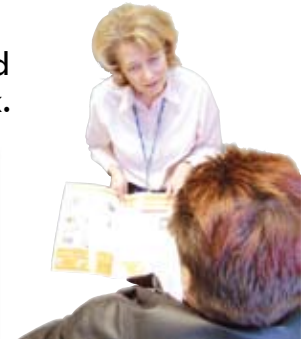
Gesture and Signing



Hearing Impairment

Introduction and Contents

The first version of **The Hospital Communication Book** was designed by **The Clear Communication People Ltd** on behalf of **The Learning Disability Partnership Board in Surrey**. This is version 2 of the book. We have updated some of the wording. We have used more photosymbols, and developed new images to give a more consistent look.



This book aims to help hospital staff in 2 ways, and contains 2 sections

- **Section 1** - To give hospital staff basic information about the communication needs people may have
- **Section 2** - To be a practical communication tool people can use to help communicate together

Section 1 - Information Pages

- **Page 3** - Communicating with speech
- **Page 4** - Supporting people with visual impairments
- **Page 5** - Supporting people with a hearing loss
- **Page 6** - Using Signing
- **Page 7** - Examples of useful signs
- **Page 8** - Using pictures & photos for communication

These pages aim to explain some of the key communication issues for people. Also to give you advice and practical tips on how to communicate clearly with a wide range of people who may have difficulties communicating.

Section 2 - The Picture and Photo Toolkit

- **Page 9** - Drinks
- **Page 10** - Food
- **Page 11** - People / alphabet
- **Page 12** - Personal things
- **Page 13** - Personal care
- **Page 14** - Symptoms
- **Page 15** - Degree of Pain
- **Pages 16, 17, 18** - Procedures
- **Pages 19 & 20** - Body parts
- **Page 21** - Full Body
- **Page 22** - Nil by Mouth
- **Page 23** - Places
- **Page 24** - When Do I Go Home ?

These are pages of pictures you can use to offer people choices, explain what is going to happen, and help them to communicate to you. Page 8 gives important advice on how to use the pictures. Not everyone will be able to recognise the meaning of all the pictures. Use them to back up what you are saying.

We are keen that you use this book in any way you feel can improve a person's experience whilst in hospital. You may find it useful to photocopy some of the pages to use separately. For example the 'Nil by Mouth' page can be copied to be displayed above a person's bed. **Most photos used in this book are Photosymbols. Photosymbols is a photo imagebank you can buy and use. Go to www.photosymbols.com for more information.** We have created the line drawings ourselves. We would like to thank the Bentley Day Service Building Links Group for helping us to develop them.



Communicating Clearly with Speech

We often talk too fast



It takes more time for many people to process words they hear.

This is true for many people with a learning disability, if English is not your first language, and also for all people when they are feeling anxious.

People don't understand all the words we use



Use everyday words wherever you can.

Use short simple sentences. Have only one idea in a sentence. You may have a much larger vocabulary than the person you are communicating with.

Use very Literal Language

When people are talking to us we understand much of their meaning by their tone and body language.

Also, we often talk using abstract phrases rather than accurate words. Look at these phrases.

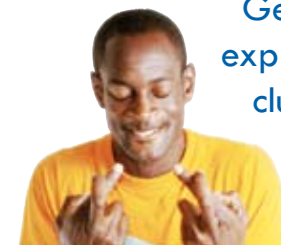
I'll give you a bell later

The doctor's doing her rounds

He can't see the wood for the trees

Some people will be less skilled at interpreting abstract language. They take a more literal meaning from words, and can get confused.

Using gestures helps



Gestures and facial expressions give visual clues about the meaning of what you are saying, as well as

slowing down how fast you speak.

Some people with a learning disability may only pick up key words in a sentence.

This means they may only take in one, two, or three words of your sentence. For example :



Unfortunately due to complications it's not possible for you to go **home** yet, we may know more **tomorrow**

home tomorrow



It's important to make sure the person has understood the main idea of your message

DON'T SHOUT - IT'S RUDE, AND DOESN'T HELP COMPREHENSION !!!!

Supporting People with Visual Impairments



"In the UK 17,000 people with sight problems use a white cane. Another 5000 use guide dogs. There are many more who need help with their everyday living".

There are around 23,000 people in the UK who have a severe loss of both sight and hearing.

About 200,000 have less serious dual sensory loss.

Be aware how you explain things. We often talk in a very visual way. For example when asked where the toilet is "the green door on the right" is not a helpful answer! If you are physically shown you can work the route out for yourself.

To make hand writing more legible, choose a dark felt tip pen and write neatly using thicker strokes. Be aware that some people have good vision in a limited area so would be ok with smaller print.

Avoid clutter! Try to minimise the risk of someone tripping over things

It's important to take the time to tell people where the important things are like toilets, call buttons, and drinks.

People may need a bit of time before they are confident. It can help people to have a bed near a landmark in the room, say a bed at the end rather than in the middle.

Good lighting is important. A clip on reading lamp may be useful for a person to have.



A magnifying glass may be useful to have around the ward for people who have a visual impairment to use to read.

Be aware that people have a variety of sight difficulties and a magnifier may not meet their needs.

Encourage people to bring in their own magnifier.



Menus and food are a very common difficulty for people with sight problems in hospital. People will often have difficulty reading and ticking the menus as they are usually printed in very small writing. Read the menu out for someone or enlarge it on the photocopier if someone reads large print.

Meals may be left on a tray, on a table, which is out of reach near the end of the bed. Someone who has a visual impairment may not see the meal and miss their food. It's important that staff take the time to describe to the person what is happening & where things are.

Supporting People with a Hearing Loss

Firstly, establish how the deaf person communicates.
If they are asking you a question using their voice, it is safe to assume that they will be expecting to lip-read your reply.

- **Face the person directly**, if you look away the deaf person cannot see your lips.
- **Speak clearly at a normal pace.** Do not shout
- **Make sure you have good light on your face** so the person can see your features and read your lips easily.
- **Use whole sentences rather than one word replies** - lip-reading is 70% guess work and many words look the same. Using sentences gives contextual clues.
- **Be patient**, if you are asked to repeat something try changing the sentence slightly, it may make it easier to understand.
- **Do not give up**, if you cannot make yourself understood then try writing it down or drawing what you mean.
- **If the person is a sign language user, they will probably still expect to have to try to lip-read your reply.** Very few hearing people sign, and deaf people are used to trying to communicate with hearing people.
- **Use gestures to help explain what you are saying.** Use gestures, point, mime to help explain what you are saying. E.g. Show a cup and ask what they want to drink.

Mime driving a car to ask if you can give them a lift. Point to objects to give clues, or point to give directions. Show size and shape with your hands

- **Use facial expressions to help convey meaning.**
- **Fingerspelling** - Deaf people usually fingerspell names, places, and unusual words.



If the person has a learning disability and a hearing loss then please note this general advice about hearing loss, but also allow for the person's learning disability see advice on page 3.



Using Signing To Support Speech



The main benefit of using signing with speech is that it makes communication visual.

People can see what you are saying as well as hearing it.

People then have more ways of understanding the message.



British Sign Language (BSL)

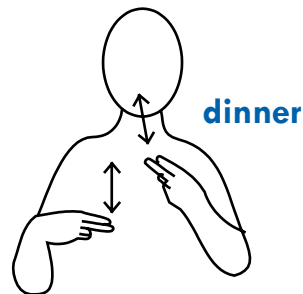
Is a full visual language used by many deaf people to communicate. Not everyone who signs uses the full BSL.

Some people use signs to support the words they are speaking. Many people who acquired a hearing loss later in life use signing in this way.

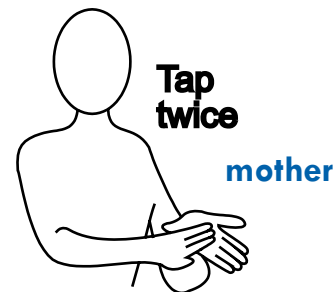
A deaf person may need the support of an interpreter. Contact your local Deaf Services Team.

On the following page we have included diagrams of a few signs you may find useful on a hospital ward. These are signs for things not easily represented by a picture. It's good to use the pictures where you can

Some signs have an arrow which shows you the direction to move your hand. The double headed arrows here mean up and down.



A more specific action is explained in writing.



To explain that you are going for a drive you might say 'we are going in the car' as it keeps the language simple.

Makaton Signing

Makaton is a language programme integrating speech, manual signs, and graphic symbols. Many people with a learning disability use Makaton.

Key words are signed.

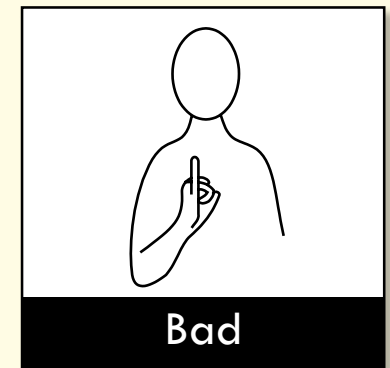
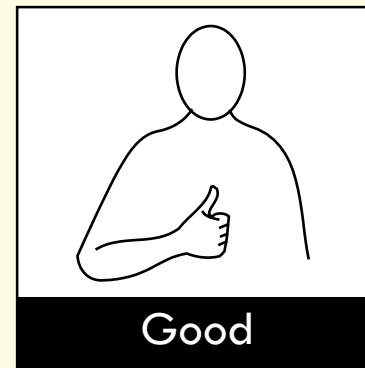
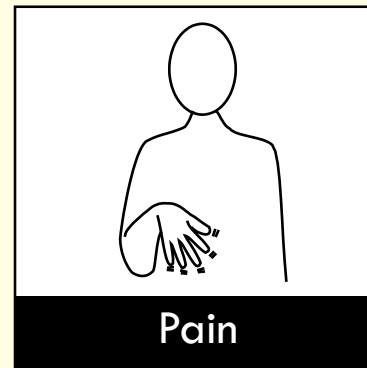
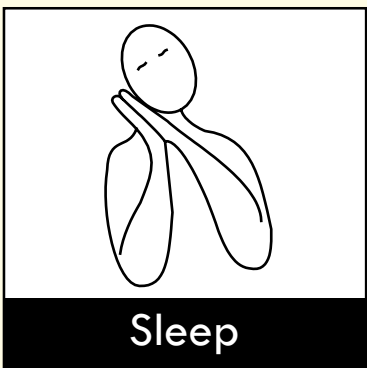
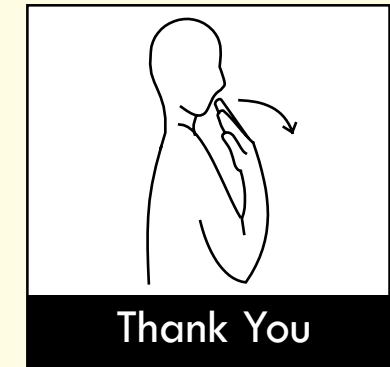
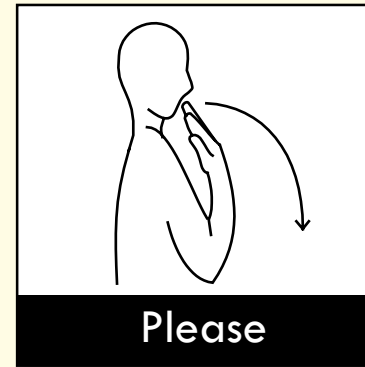
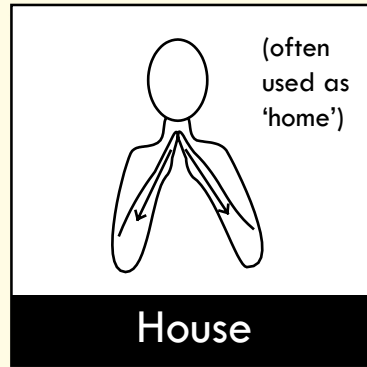
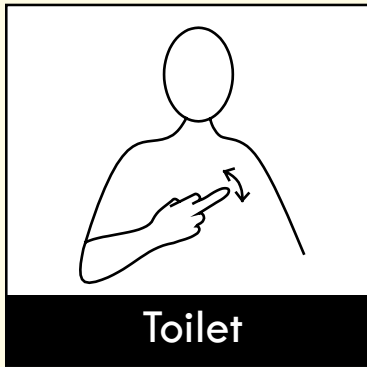
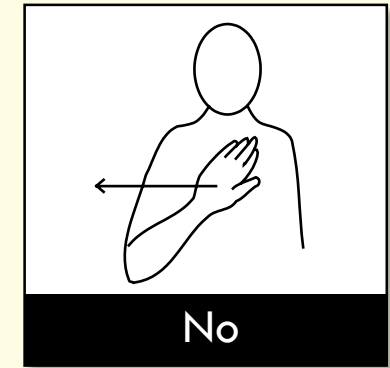
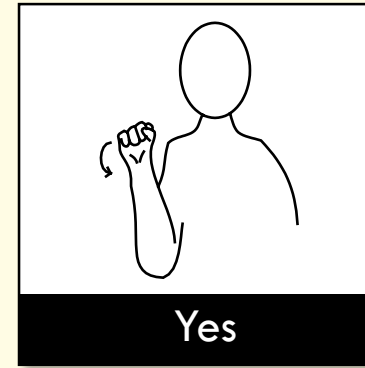
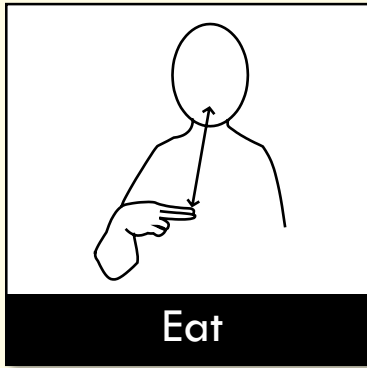
We are **going** to the **shop** in the **car**.

You only sign the bold words.

Contact Makaton for advice on training. Their website is www.makaton.org

The limitation of signing is that, as with speech, when you stop signing the message is gone and relies on the person's memory.

Useful Makaton Signs



Please Note : These signs are from the Makaton Vocabulary Development Project. They are used here for illustration. People learn Makaton signing in groups supported by Makaton representatives. Please go to www.makaton.org for more information

Using Photos, Pictures and Symbols

Photos, Pictures and symbols can help people to:

Understand Information

Many people with a learning disability do not read, and some people find it hard to understand when you explain things.

Pictures can help get your message across.



Tell you what they need

Some people with a learning disability do not communicate verbally. Some people's speech can be hard to understand. **Pictures can help them get their message across**

Make choices

Many people find it hard to make choices in their head. Having pictures to look at helps.



One benefit of using pictures is that they are permanent. Once you stop speaking or signing you rely on the person's memory.

The pictures we have included on the next few pages may help you to communicate more clearly with a wide range of people.

Many people with a learning disability will be familiar with some pictures and symbols. They will use them day to day to communicate. It is good if they bring their own communication tool into hospital with them

Note of Caution

A picture, photo, or symbol is only a 2 dimensional representation of an object or idea. Not all people with a learning disability will take a meaning from a picture, photo, or symbol.



Some people have a very profound disability and do not use pictures and symbols at all. Using an object, like a cup or a gown, can help to explain what you're saying.

Many pictures and symbols look like what they represent - others are more abstract. If you can't easily tell what a picture represents other people will struggle too, and will need help. Remember that many people won't be able to read the word underneath.

Total Communication

Total Communication is about not relying on just one method of communication. A person may use a mixture of speech, gesture and pictures to get their message across.

We need to be able to adapt how we communicate for each person we meet.