

Staying connected: Police services for Deaf communities

To mark International Week of Deaf People (21-27 September), Avon and Somerset Police is highlighting the range of ways D/deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people can contact the police.

In an emergency

If you use British Sign Language (BSL) you can call 999 by using the 999 BSL video relay service, or download the 999 BSL App on your smart device. www.999bsl.co.uk

If you register in advance, you can contact 999 through text message. Further information in registering for this service can be found by visiting:

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/contact/british-sign-language-bsl/emergency-sms-service-for-deaf-deafened-hard-of-hearing-and-speech-impaired-people/

If you use Text Relay, dial 18000 and you will be put through to the police.

For non-emergencies

If you use BSL you can place a 101 call through the **Convo** service (previously known as SignLive). This service connects callers to a qualified online BSL interpreter who will relay the conversation between the caller and the police.

If you use Text Relay, dial 18000 101 and you will be put through to the police.

Police Officers and staff also have access to Convo's interpreter support.

Avon and Somerset Police has a number of staff trained in BSL to improve engagement with Deaf communities. These Police Link Officer for Deaf (PLOD) have achieved BSL qualifications (up to Level 2) alongside Deaf awareness training.

Detective Superintendent Mike Buck, Avon and Somerset Police's Force Lead, Policing for people that are Deaf or hard of hearing, said:

"Everyone should be able to contact the police in a way that is accessible to them. Through services such as 999 BSL, Convo and Text Relay, as well as our network of trained Police Link Officers for Deaf, we're working to ensure D/deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people can access our services and receive support when they need it most."

Learn more by visiting: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/contact/british-sign-language-bsl/