



Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**
Making Derbyshire Safer

5 OCTOBER 2018

THREE EAST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES JOINTLY SIGN UP TO BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE CHARTER

Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services have jointly signed up to the British Sign Language (BSL) Charter.

Signing the Charter together is a show of commitment by all three Services to promote better access to public services for members of the Deaf community.

The British Deaf Association are asking local and national organisations from across the public, private and voluntary sector to sign up to the Charter and work to improve access and rights for Deaf people who use sign language.

The Charter contains five key pledges that will help support the Deaf community.

They are:

1. Consult formally and informally with the local Deaf community on a regular basis
2. Ensure access for Deaf people to information and services
3. Support Deaf children and families
4. Ensure staff working with deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language
5. Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language.

All three Services are committed to ensuring their Deaf users have the same quality of provision, information, standards and right to be informed on a par with others in the wider community.

email: enquiries@derbys-fire.gov.uk
www.derbys-fire.gov.uk

Terry McDermott MA
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



Agnes Dyab, Chair of British Deaf Association said “The commitment from the three fire services has been magnificent, we have been able to hit 3 birds with one stone. Those three signatures will positively impact Deaf communities in three large regions across the East Midlands. We hope it provides inspiration for other fire and rescue services to follow.”

By signing the Charter, all Services are committing to work in collaboration to ensure members of the Deaf community can access services when they are required and offer their views during our consultation processes.

Robert Foulkes from Derby Deaf Forum said “As a community we have faced direct and indirect discrimination in the past but today I feel very pleased that the door is open.

I now have the confidence to engage with the Fire Service and equally it’s heart-warming to see they feel confident to communicate directly with our community.

This commitment shows an improvement in access and it means we don’t have to use other agencies to source information.”

Gavin Tomlinson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service said: "Like our colleagues from Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, we are extremely proud to sign the Charter for British Sign Language.

A major part of a modern fire & rescue service is developing the relations we have with all people within the communities that we serve.

By signing this Charter, we are pledging to improve access to our services to those who use BSL whilst reaffirming our commitment to help make Derbyshire safer. We can only do this effectively by engaging locally to ensure full participation from the Deaf community."

