

Question from Cllr Stuart Sansome & Response from PCC
22nd February 2021

QUESTION

Can the Commissioner reassure the Panel that he has procedures in place in order to better understand the special needs of the deaf community in engaging and alerting the emergency services. Emerging technologies are allowing residents to access emergency services who suffer from partial / full deafness, but one size doesn't fit all.

RESPONSE

SYP has a scheme referred to as Police Link Officers for the Deaf (PLOD) to ensure resources are maximised in providing reassurance and support where needed and facilitating communication with all sections of the Deaf/Hard of hearing community. The focal aim being to improve communication for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

There are approximately 20-25 Police Link Officers working within the force in various roles from Enquiry Desk staff to PCSO's to Detectives and support staff who promote equality of access to the police for deaf, deaf-blind, deafened and Hard of Hearing people. These staff were trained within SYP on BSL Level 1. The PLOD initiative was originally established in Hampshire Constabulary with similar schemes being introduced within other police forces; Avon & Somerset and selected London boroughs covered by the Metropolitan police.

The Police Link Officers for the Deaf (PLOD) scheme involves Police Officers and Police Staff who have received training in Deaf Awareness and are skilled in the use of British Sign Language (BSL) at different levels who do this alongside their day job. PLOD officers assist in providing a service for any non-emergency situation when communication support is required as a point of contact. Whilst PLOD officers may hold qualifications in British Sign Language, they will not provide any interpreting for cases involving evidential procedures such as taking a statement or interviewing. The services of an independent qualified interpreter would be used in these cases wherever possible.

The officers use their skills to assist in enquiries, provide advice and information or gain early information to the best of their ability. PLOD officers help with communication, discussing any community and crime related problems with the Deaf community by pre-arranged appointment. They are not however an emergency point of contact.

The main duties of PLOD officers is to act as a central point of contact for the Deaf, deafened and Hard of Hearing communities, Police Officers and staff providing advice and guidance:

- Provide support for deaf victims and witnesses, ensuring they are being given an equitable service
- Promote Deaf awareness and sign language training
- Management of the PLOD scheme
- Ensure corporate information accessible in BSL on SYP website
- Regularly update the External website with BSL information
- To engage and build links with Deaf clubs and organisations within SYP
- Promote the work of SYP through events such as learn to sign week and the BDA national conference
- Providing assistance at a front enquiry desk within police stations
- Assist in the custody area whilst awaiting services of an NRCPD registered and qualified interpreter

- Offering communication support, experience and advice at a scene of crime and during an investigation
- Assisting in crime prevention matters
- Assisting victims of crime ensuring they are kept informed about progress of their case and outcome.
- For evidential procedures, such as taking statements from witnesses or victims, interviewing deaf suspects or a Deaf person acting as an Appropriate Adult for a hearing juvenile, the police should engage the services of an independent qualified Interpreter wherever possible.

The PLOD scheme has its own recognition within the Police Service with its own logo, which is shown below, but in a British Police service that has 43 individual Forces, and where discretion allows many different practices, this logo and the practices that it supports are only recognised within a handful of Forces, however the climate is changing and forces are realising the requirement to fulfil this gap.

The below are the SYP logo's on our communications regarding PLOD.



Image 1: Police Link Officers for the Deaf Logo



I have attached below some of the things we have done around this work:

Find out about Police Link Officers for people who are Deaf (PLOD) -

<https://youtu.be/NzbyRilxEQk>

How to contact the police in a non-emergency - <https://youtu.be/yzpUIKSDNQ>

How to contact the police in an emergency - https://youtu.be/IY_wGcEHUoI

[What can PLOD do for you?](#)

PLOD will use their skills to assist in enquiries, provide advice and information or gain PLOD will be a central point of contact for the Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing

[South Yorkshire Intranet / SYP Intranet](#)

Frequently asked questions

South Yorkshire Intranet / SYP Intranet

PLOD staff engage with deaf adults and children

Our Police Link Officers for the Deaf (PLOD) have been visiting deaf and hard of hearing prevention advice and talk about the PLOD programme, as well as gathering feedback about

[SYP Intranet / News](#)

We're proud to support Deaf Awareness Week

Throughout May, our PLOD staff (Police Link Officers for the Deaf) will be visiting deaf is supporting #DeafAwarenessWeek18 and raising awareness about the following PLOD events

[SYP Intranet / News](#)

WATCH: Being profoundly deaf as an SYP employee

This week is Deaf Awareness Week, see video below:

[SYP Intranet / News](#)

If anyone is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or speech impaired, they are able to send an SMS text message to South Yorkshire Police on 07786220022 and this is monitored at Atlas Court by the Force Incident Manager.

We have a PLOD email address internally that staff can send requests/emails to if any assistance or support is required in dealing with members of this vulnerable community.