

Coverage Report

Monday 14th May

This report summarises coverage arising from the publication of an open letter in the Times calling for equal access to telecommunications for deaf people. Twenty high-profile signatories were secured from across Parliament and the deaf community, representing the 10 million deaf people in the UK. The letter generated media coverage in the national media, on key technology and deaf blogs and on Twitter.

The Times

Open Letter to the Chief Executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BSkyB

Dear Sirs,

As we mark Deaf Awareness Week, we are writing to express our frustration at the lack of progress towards the introduction of a telecommunications service which meets the needs of deaf people. Six months ago, the Communications Minister called on you to engage with the deaf community to discuss these needs and establish how the industry could deliver modern relay services including enhanced text relay, captioned telephony and video relay services. You have failed to meet with us in open forum in response to the Minister's request and your silence has been deeply disappointing.

Deaf people have the right to access telecommunications which are functionally equivalent to those enjoyed by other end-users. For British Sign Language users this can only be achieved through a fully operational and universally available Video Relay Service. Enhanced text based relay services and captioned telephony will provide similar transformational services for deaf people who use spoken and/or written English.

We urge you to engage fully with us and all relevant stakeholders to find a viable solution which delivers functionally equivalent telecommunications for deaf people. Positive action by the industry is long overdue. You are delaying the introduction of modern relay services, and exacerbating the isolation and disadvantage which is faced by deaf people who are denied equal access to telecommunications.

Deaf people are waiting for you to act.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Edwards
Chairman
UK Council on Deafness

Ruth Myers
Chairman
TAG

David Buxton
Chief Executive Officer
British Deaf Association

Susan Daniels
Chief Executive
National Deaf Children's Society

Gill Morbey
Chief Executive
Sense

Steve Powell
Chief Executive
SignHealth

Bencie Woll BA, MA, PhD
Director, **Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre, UCL**

Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport 2009 – 2010

Rt Hon Malcolm Bruce MP
Chair
All-Party Group on Deafness

Anas Sarwar MP
Deputy Leader
Scottish Labour Party

Rt Hon Tom Brake MP
Co-Chair, Liberal Democrat Policy Committee on Equalities

Mike Crockart MP
Member, Joint Committee on Human Rights

Roger Beeson
Chair
Royal Association for Deaf People

Ross Trotter
Chairman
National Association of Deafened People

Gordon Chapman
Chairman
DN: UK

Clare Kennedy
Chief Executive
deafPLUS

Jeff McWhinney
Managing Director
SignVideo

John Walker
Convenor of Deaf Studies
University of Sussex

Charlie Swinbourne
Deaf Journalist and Broadcaster

Mark Nelson
Managing Director
Remark!

SOCIETYDAILY



Society daily 11.05.12

UK's poorest face tightest squeeze

Clare Horton

guardian.co.uk, Friday 11 May 2012 12.17 BST

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• #relaycampaign, which is urging telecomms companies to improve **deaf people's access to telecommunications**. Campaigners, including the leaders of the UK's main deaf charities, have written an open letter to the chief executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BskyB, accusing the industry is worsening inequalities by delaying the introduction of specialised relay services, which allow deaf people to use telecommunications. The campaign, spearheaded by **VRS Today**, coincides with Deaf Awareness Week. The charities say a video relay service, which allows BSL users to speak in sign language over the telephone, via a video interpreter at speeds close to standard conversation, would mean "equality and opportunity for tens of thousands of people".

Meanwhile, the National Deaf Children's Society has launched a new campaign - Look, Smile Chat - which aims to tackle the isolation experienced by many deaf teenagers at school. The charity has made a series of short films to explain the issue

Other news

Better deal urged for deaf phone users



Laura Whateley
Updated 29 minutes ago

Deaf charities and MPs are calling on phone companies to stop discriminating against hard of hearing customers by failing to adopt new technologies.

In an open letter to the chief executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BSKyB, published in today's Times, twenty signatories express their frustration at what they say is a "lack of progress" in the introduction of a telecommunications service that meets the needs of deaf people.

Dr James Christie
uses sign language to
demonstrate the new
technology
SWNS.com

Post a comment

★ Recommend (0)

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The screenshot shows the ZDNet website interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the ZDNet logo on the left, a search bar in the center, and 'Login', 'Join', and 'Sign In' buttons on the right. Below the header is a red navigation bar with links for 'UK Edition', 'News', 'Reviews', 'Blogs', 'Oracle vs Google', 'Mobile IT', 'White papers', 'Broadband', 'Windows 8', 'Cloud', and 'Security'. A large advertisement for the ASUS Zenbook Ultrabook is featured, showing the Intel Core i7 logo and the ASUS logo. The main content area displays the breadcrumb 'ZDNet UK / Blogs / Jack's Blog' followed by the article title 'Deaf users campaign for US-style video relay service'. The author is identified as 'By Jack Schofield, 11 May, 2012 16:58'. To the left of the main text are sections for 'Daily Newsletters' and 'About this blog'. To the right, there is a red advertisement for Avaya Customer Experience Management with the text 'Click here to see how simple + AVAYA The Power of We'. Below the Avaya ad is a red box with the text 'Get ZDNet UK's daily newsletter' and a white box with the text 'Enter your email address to sign up'.

<http://www.zdnet.co.uk/blogs/jacks-blog-10017212/deaf-users-campaign-for-us-style-video-relay-service-10026157/>

The Limping Chicken

The UK's independent deaf news and views website! Lays eggs every weekday morning

Deaf News: Open letter in The Times challenges telecoms companies to act

Posted on May 11, 2012

1



In an open letter published in The Times today, a number of leading deaf charities and individuals have called on the Chief Executives of telecoms companies BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BskyB to take action to improve deaf access to telecommunications.

The letter, which coincides with Deaf Awareness Week, states that the industry is worsening inequality by delaying the introduction of specialised relay services.

Following talks in November 2011, the Communications Minister, Ed Vaizey, called on the telecommunications industry to work with the deaf community to find solutions which meet their communications needs. The heads of the British Deaf Association, UK Council on Deafness and the National Deaf Children's Society now say that they have become frustrated by the industry's

<http://limpingchicken.com/2012/05/11/deaf-news-open-letter-in-the-times-challenges-telecoms-companies-to-act/>

Remark!



CLICK HERE FOR THE BEST
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NEWSID-793_OPEN LETTER TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF BT, O2, VODAFONE, THREE, TALK TALK, KCOM, VIRGIN
MEDIA, EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE AND BSKYB



Back



Open Letter to the Chief Executive ...

As we mark Deaf Awareness Week, we are writing to express our frustration at the lack of progress

READ MORE...

11th May 2012

Open Letter to the Chief Executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BSKyB

The following open letter expressing the lack of action and progress towards the introduction of a telecommunications service which meets the needs of deaf people will appear in today's Times newspaper, Friday 11th May 2012.

Dear Sirs,

RECENT NEWS

Matrix Chambers Deaf Awarene ...
New Trailer - The Secret Lab ...
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http://remark.uk.com/community/deaf%20news/newsid-793_Open%20Letter%20to%20the%20Chief%20Executives%20of%20BT,%20O2,%20Vodafone,%20Three,%20Talk%20Talk,%20KCom,%20Virgin%20Media,%20Everything%20Everywhere%20and%20BSkyB

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Campaign to improve deaf people's telecoms access

Moderator: lorraine

POSTREPLY Search this topic... Search

1 post • Page 1 of 1

Campaign to improve deaf people's telecoms access

by Sandra Omar » Sun May 13, 2012 4:20 am

Sandra Omar

Posts: 11707
Joined: Sat Feb 16, 2008 7:40 pm

Open Letter to the CEOs of the telecoms companies The following letter was sent to the Chief Executives of the telecoms companies on Friday 11th May 2012, and published in the Times newspaper (Page 36).

Open Letter to the Chief Executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BskyB

Dear Sirs,

As we mark Deaf Awareness Week, we are writing to express our frustration at the lack of progress towards the introduction of a telecommunications service which meets the needs of deaf people. Six months ago, the Communications Minister called on you to engage with the deaf community to discuss these needs and establish how the industry could deliver modern relay services including enhanced text relay, captioned telephony

<http://www.supportsolutions.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?t=17838>

Steve Beasant (Lib Dem blogger)

Steve Beasant

Liberal Democrat Councillor for East Marsh Ward

Malcolm Bruce joins Deaf Community Leaders to challenge telecommunications industry over inequalities

by Steve Beasant on May 12, 2012

Liberal Democrat MP for Gordon Malcolm Bruce is backing a campaign by leading deafness campaigners which calls on the telecommunications industry to take action to improve deaf people's access to telecommunications. In an open letter to the Chief Executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BskyB, the signatories including deaf charities, key MPs and other stakeholders state that the industry is failing to address inequalities by delaying the introduction of specialised relay services, which allow deaf people to use telecommunications. The publication of the letter comes during Deaf Awareness Week.

Malcolm Bruce said:

"It is disappointing that the industry has failed to come together so far and answer not only campaigners concerns, but the Government's. For months the communications minister in the Coalition Government, Ed Vaizey MP has called on the telecommunications industry to work with the deaf community to find solutions which meet their communications needs. The deaf community has been continually frustrated by the lack of engagement.

"I hope that these telecommunication companies recognise that deaf people have an equal right to a working life and a family life and as such have the

STEVE BEASANT




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E: s.beasant@gmail.com

<http://stevebeasant.mycouncillor.org.uk/2012/05/12/malcolm-bruce-joins-deaf-community-leaders-to-challenge-telecommunications-industry-over-inequalities/>

Deaf4Life

Open Letter to the Chief Executives of Telcos published in The Times

Tony Posted 11 May 2012 - 05:38 AM (#1)



The Big Boss
Deaf4Life Admin

Posts: 3,602
Joined: 22-July 04
Gender: Male
Hearing Deaf Status:

This just in from DeafTAG...

Quote

Open Letter to the Chief Executives of BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, KCom, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BSkjB

As we mark Deaf Awareness Week, we are writing to express our frustration at the lack of progress towards the introduction of a telecommunications service which meets the needs of deaf people. Six months ago, the Communications Minister called on you to engage with the deaf community to discuss these needs and establish how the industry could deliver modern relay services including enhanced text relay, captioned telephony and video relay services. You have failed to meet with us in open forum in response to the Minister's request and your silence has been deeply disappointing.

Read more at

<http://www.deaftag.org.uk/abid=67&mid=397>

This was published in The Times newspaper today.

Do you think something will come out of this? Will the Chief Executives of these companies reply? Time will tell...

- Tony Sutton
- Check out my [Car's DashCam on YouTube](#)

<http://www.deaf4life.co.uk/index.php?showtopic=15218>

Just Communication

Just Communication Ltd

News, views and events

FRIDAY, 11 MAY 2012

Deaf users campaign for video relay service


After a decade of having their needs neglected by telecoms providers, leaders of the UK's deaf community have written an open letter published in today's Times newspaper writes Jack Schofield for ZEDNET (11/05/12).

They are campaigning for a universally-accessible video relay service of the sort that the Americans have operated successfully for the past 10 years. This would enable British Sign Language users to make and receive calls at any time, with no pre-booking, and at no additional cost over a normal phone contract.

The revised EU Electronic Communications Framework, rubber stamped by UK Government, sets out a legal requirement to ensure that disabled end-users enjoy access to telecommunications that are functionally equivalent to those enjoyed by other end-users.

Unfortunately, the UK government appears to have done nothing substantial to meet this requirement for deaf users, simply handing off the problem to telecoms suppliers such as BT, O2, Vodafone, Three, Talk Talk, Virgin Media, Everything Everywhere and BSkjB.

The deaf organisations say they talked to communications minister Ed Vaizey, and that in November, he "repeatedly called on the telecommunications industry to work with the deaf community to find solutions which meet their communications needs".



NEW! Check the availability of a BSL Interpreter and reserve an assignment online

BOOK NOW

We wanted a better way to keep our customers up to date with what's happening in the Deaf world and what we're doing.

We've set up the feeds for Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter and will add Google+ when we can.

Your feedback is welcome; post to this site or email feedback@justcommunication.co.uk

http://jcltd.blogspot.com/2012/05/deaf-users-campaign-for-video-relay.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+JustCommunicationLtd+%28Just+Communication+Ltd%29

Community Channel

The screenshot shows the Community Channel website. At the top left is the Community Channel logo. To the right are links for 'Login', 'Register', and 'Newsletter Signup'. Below the logo is a search bar. A navigation bar contains links for 'Local 360', 'Video', 'Featured', 'Your Space', 'Talent Studio', 'TV Schedule', and 'Info'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: '/ Home / Local 360 / Community Newswire'. The main content area features a 'News' tab and the article title 'Call to boost deaf telecomms access'. The article is dated 'Friday 11th May 2012 Press Association'. The text discusses the challenges deaf people face with telecommunications and mentions an open letter to telecomms firms. A 'Proud to be supported by' section features logos for 'LOTTERY FUNDED' and 'BIG LOTTERY FUND'.

<http://www.communitychannel.org/local360/community-newswire/2012/05/11/call-to-boost-deaf-telecomms-access/>

MediaTrust Newswire

The screenshot shows the MediaTrust Newswire website. At the top left is the MediaTrust logo. To the right are icons for various media types and a search bar. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'About', 'Get Support', 'Give Support', 'Help Engine', and 'newsnet'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Get Support > Community Newswire > Latest news'. The main content area features a 'Get Support' sidebar with links for 'Community Newswire', 'Latest news', 'Submit press release', 'Feedback', 'FAQs', 'Tips from the newsroom', 'Research report', 'Free Professional Support', 'Free Resources Hub', 'Productions', and 'Training'. The main article is titled 'Call to boost deaf telecomms access' and is dated 'Friday 11th May 2012'. The text is identical to the screenshot above, discussing the challenges deaf people face with telecommunications and mentioning an open letter to telecomms firms.








<http://www.mediatrust.org/newswirefeed/technology-deaf-1105-technology-deaf/>

Twitter activity

- **VRS Today!** @VRStoday 1h
BSL video of the #relaycampaign letter to the telcos in today's Times - bit.ly/KLvepJ
Expand
- **jim edwards** @corneliuedwards 1h
Do you agree that telcos should be more willing to provide all forms of relay services #relaycampaign
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite
- **Malcolm Bruce** @malcolmbuce 1h
Deaf community need telecoms industry to address inequalities, see today's Times P.36 #relaycampaign
Expand
- **UK Council on Deafness** @UKDeafCouncil 1h
#Deaf organisations slam telecom companies over access delays ndcs.org.uk/about_us/campa... #RelayCampaign
Expand
- **TAG** @DeafTAG 2h
 @SignHealth Great but what about deaf people who use English as their first language and do not know BSL. #relaycampaign
View conversation
- **TAG** @DeafTAG 2h
 Open letter in The Times today inviting Telcos to meet deaf to discuss Telephone Relay Services #relaycampaign. Pls RT deaftag.org.uk/News.aspx
Expand
- **VRS Today!** @VRStoday 3h
This letter calls on the CEOs of the telcos to act. Deaf people are waiting. #relaycampaign bit.ly/KL63n8
Expand

Tweets

- **TAG** @DeafTAG 3h
 Open letter in The Times today inviting Telcos to meet deaf to discuss Telephone Relay Services #relaycampaign. Pls RT deaftag.org.uk/News.aspx
Retweeted by Laura Whateley
Expand
- **Malcolm Bruce** @malcolmbuce 2h
Deaf community need telecoms industry to address inequalities, see today's Times P.36 #relaycampaign
Retweeted by Laura Whateley
Expand
- **Laura Whateley** @LWhateley 6m
BT, Vodafone, O2, Three, Virgin, Talk Talk, KCom, Everything Everywhere and BSkyB you should be adopting new tech to help deaf customers
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite
- **Laura Whateley** @LWhateley 10m
Deaf charities & MPs call on telecoms companies to stop discriminating against hard of hearing customers thetim.es/ll9dmO #relaycampaign
Expand

-  **Society Guardian** @SocietyGuardian 4m
In the #socdaily roundup: @Charity_Tech @campbellclaret @itsmotherswork @maxmoar @puffles2010 @vrstoday
gu.com/p/37g4h/tw
Expand
-  **ThreeUK** @ThreeUK 33m
[@vrstoday](#) We're just taking a look now, thanks for sharing...
View conversation
-  **coHearentVision** @CoHearentviz 51m
[@VRStoday](#) Strange that the biggest deaf charity, "Action on Hearing Loss", don't seem to have signed this letter? Weren't they involved?
View conversation
-  **VRS Today!** @VRStoday 1h
[@bbcouch](#) Read the letter in the Times to the telcos on access for Deaf people - bit.ly/KL63n8 #relaycampaign
Expand
-  **VRS Today!** @VRStoday 1h
[@kcomconnected](#) will you take action on VRS for BSL users? Read the letter in the Times to your CEO - bit.ly/KL63n8 #relaycampaign
Expand
-  **Mike Crockart MP** @CrockartMP 9m
Backing VRS Today! campaign for equal access to telecomms for deaf people. Open letter in [@TheTimes](#) today. Full text at tiny.cc/uxd5dw
Details
-  **Sign Solutions** @signsolutionsuk 1h
Video **Relay** service like US needed znet.co.uk/blogs/jacks-bl...
Expand
-  **deafies** @deafiesUK 12 May
Deaf users campaign for US-style video **relay** service - ZDNet UK (blog): bit.ly/UIWXo #deaf
Expand
-  **DeafNewsEn** @DeafNewsEn 11 May
Deaf users campaign for US-style video **relay** service [deaf] j.mp/Kulw6Z ZDNet UK (blog) #DeafNewsUs
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite
-  **Jack Schofield** @jackschofield 11 May
Deaf users campaign for US-style video **relay** service, by me at ZDNet bit.ly/J3CPQI
Expand
-  **Flowell Galindez** @FlowGalindez 11 May
#Blog Update: Video **Relay** Service – House of Bill No. 5670: Breaking the Barriers of Speech for the **Deaf** bit.ly/Jq7mIZ
Expand
-  **TAG** @DeafTAG 11 May
Telcos invited to meet **deaf** to discuss Telephone **Relay** Services as suggested by Ed Vaizey #relaycampaign. Pls RT deaftag.org.uk/News.aspx
Expand
-  **Deaf Direct** @deafdirect 11 May
Video **Relay** Services allow **Deaf** people to communicate easily with hearing people - the service is hoped to launch soon vrstoday.com
Expand