# Coverage Report Monday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 endusers. 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!

### The Guardian



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### **SOCIETYDAILY**



### Society daily 11.05.12

UK's poorest face tightest squeeze

Clare Horton

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



•#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

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### The Times



http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/money/article3411739.ece

### **ZD.NET**



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

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# 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

<sub>1</sub> 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 new your that they have become frustrated by the industra's

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

### Remark!



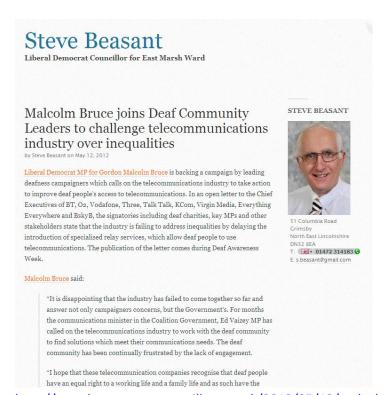
http://remark.uk.com/community/deaf%20news/newsid-

 $\frac{793 \text{ Open}\%20 \text{Letter}\%20 \text{to}\%20 \text{the}\%20 \text{Chief}\%20 \text{Executives}\%20 \text{of}\%20 \text{BT},\%20 \text{O2},\%20 \text{Vodafone},\%20 \text{Todalk}\%20 \text{Talk}\%20 \text{Talk}\%20 \text{Kcom},\%20 \text{Virgin}\%20 \text{Media},\%20 \text{Everything}\%20 \text{Everywhere}\%20 \text{and}\%20 \text{BS} \text{kyB}$ 

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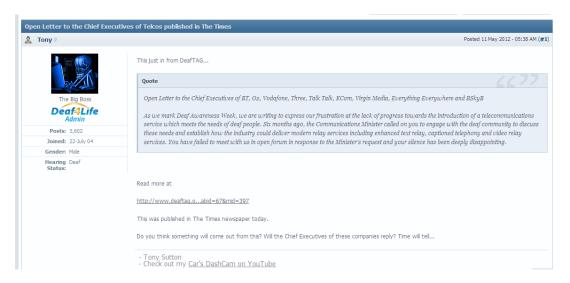


### Steve Beasant (Lib Dem blogger)



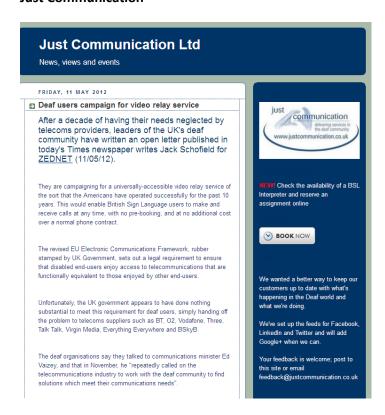
 $\frac{http://stevebeasant.mycouncillor.org.uk/2012/05/12/malcolm-bruce-joins-deaf-community-leaders-to-challenge-telecommunications-industry-over-inequalities/$ 

### Deaf4Life



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

### **Just Communication**



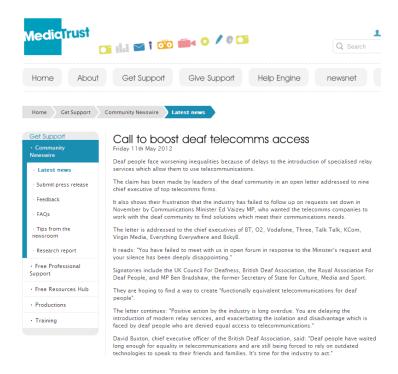
http://jcltd.blogspot.com/2012/05/deaf-users-campaign-for-videorelay.html?utm\_source=feedburner&utm\_medium=twitter&utm\_campaign=Feed%3A+JustCommunicationLtd+%28Just+Communication+Ltd%29

### **Community Channel**



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

### **MediaTrust Newswire**



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

### **Twitter activity**



Laura Whateley @LWhateley 10m
Deaf charities & MPs call on telecoms companies to stop
discriminating against hard of hearing customers thetim.es/ll9dmO
#relaycampaign
Expand



suggested by Ed Vaizey #relaycampaign. Pls RT

Video **Relay** Services allow **Deaf** people to communicate easily with hearing people - the service is hoped to launch soon <u>vrstoday.com</u>

11 May

deaftag.org.uk/News.aspx"

Deaf Direct @deafdirect

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