



Andrew Stephenson MP  
Chairman of the Conservative Party

21 July 2022

Dear Mr Stephenson

**Re: Accessibility of the announcement of the new Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister**

I am writing to ask you in your roles as Chairman of the Conservative Party and Minister Without Portfolio, to ensure that the broadcast announcements of our next Prime Minister are accessible to Deaf people who use British Sign Language.

The announcement of our next Prime Minister will, of course, be a moment of national importance: an event which interests all citizens and to which everyone should have access.

As well as the formal announcement, conventionally there are two speeches by the winning candidate. An acceptance speech at the Conservative Party event as well as a 'steps of Downing Street' speech setting out the priorities and vision of the new Government once the individual has formally become Prime Minister.

Those who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language should have equal access to the broadcast coverage of these events.

Chairman: John Morgan Chief Executive Officer: Mark Atkinson

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The British Sign Language Act 2022 was a meaningful moment for the Deaf community which saw the Government recognise the importance of sign language. In accepting the British Sign Language Act 2022, including the requirement for Government departments to report on how they communicate to the Deaf community, both the Government and the Conservative Party have accepted the principle of accessible information for the Deaf community.

BSL interpretation can be provided in different ways and there are factors which dictate what works best for any particular broadcast. But, however interpretation is delivered, will need time to make arrangements and work with the broadcasters to make sure the interpretation is properly disabled on screen. I would therefore urge these arrangements to be put in hand as soon as possible, if they aren't already, to ensure the announcement on 5 September are accessible to deaf people who use BSL.

If we can provide any further information or you would like to discuss anything further in this letter then please do not hesitate to contact our Lead for Campaigns and External Affairs, Rob Geaney.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Atkinson  
Chief Executive

CC. Chloe Smith, Minister of State for  
Disabled People, Work and Health

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