



**THE IMPORTANCE
OF DEAF EXPERT
ASSESSMENTS
DURING FAMILY
MATTERS**

WENDY ANDERSON



1



EXPERIENCE

Social care,

- Mainstream
- Specialist

Independent social work,

- Legal
- Deaf expert

Mental Health,

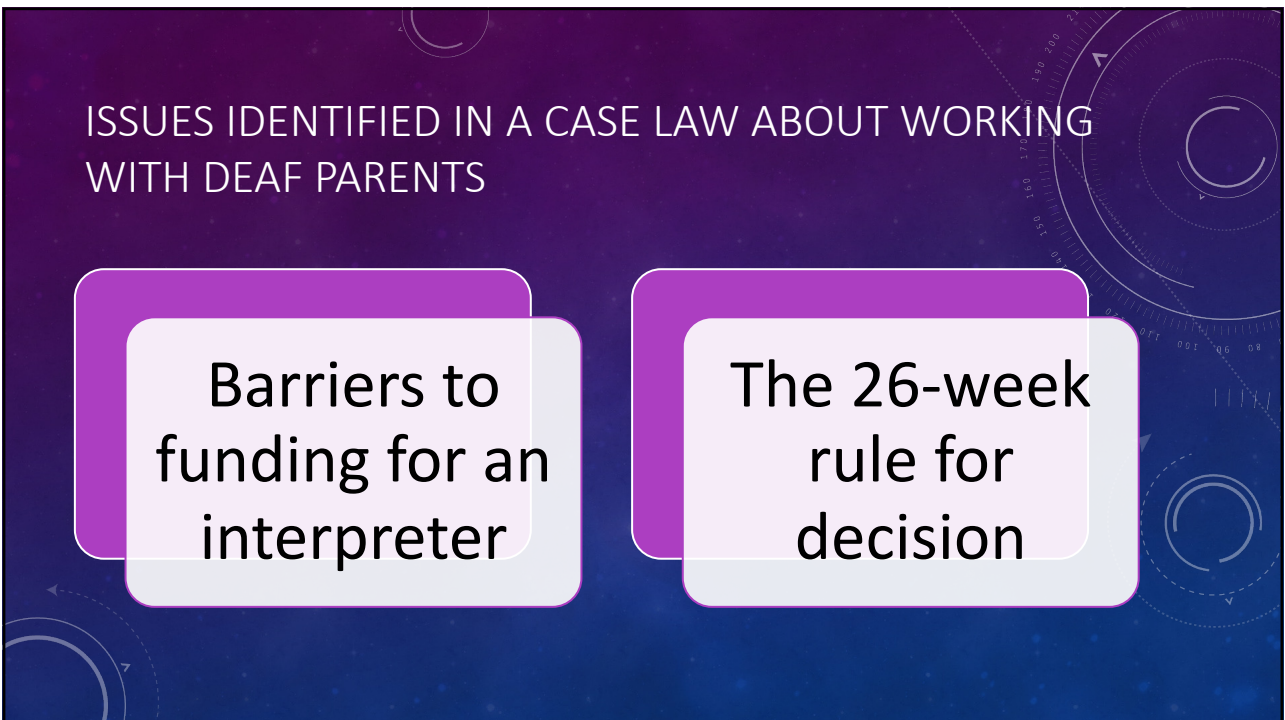
- National Deaf Services (NHS)
- Mental health tribunals



2



3



4

REVIEW

Recommendations on how to work with deaf parents.

- Consistency of interpreter(s) for meetings and family work
- Need for deaf intralingual interpreter
- Accommodation of caseload weighting for allocated team and social worker

5

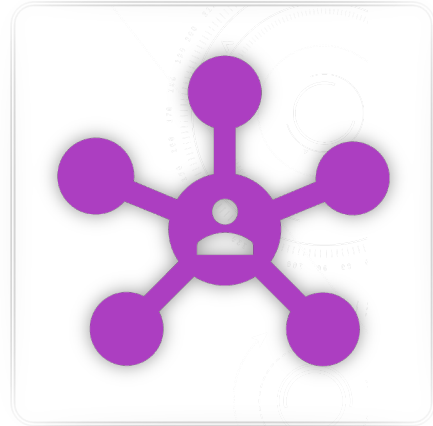
DEAF INTRALINGUAL INTERPRETERS

- Limited pool of intralingual interpreters
- Availability of resources (e.g., funding)
- Personal vs professional relationships in the deaf community
- Qualification, registration, training and CPD opportunities

6

COMMISSIONING

Word of mouth (e.g., local knowledge, interpreters, professional contacts, specialist services, Google!



WEBSITE DEAF EXPERT: <https://www.deafexpert.com>

7

MY ROLE

Ensure understanding

- Reports (e.g., accessible, explained and opportunity for reinforcement)

Signposting

- Services
- Information
- Support and advice

Challenging

- Sharing good practice with social care
- Recommendations to the court and legal parties (as appropriate)
- Informing about deaf 'lived' experience

8


'NOTHING ABOUT ME, WITHOUT ME'

- Inclusion of deaf parents within legal proceedings



- Fully informed throughout (*e.g., what has been said or written about me or us*)
- Able to respond appropriately (*BSL, written, through advocates or in other forms*)

9



Difference between Deaf Expert & Deaf Intermediary

10

CASE STUDY

Court interpreters surprised to see a deaf expert giving evidence in the courtroom

Using my preferred interpreter(s) (ATW)

Domain-specific jargon (legal)

Informing the judge of difficulties in understanding lines of questioning or presentation of evidence

Knowledge of social care procedures and jargon, particularly legislation about children & families

Communicating and working with the court interpreting team (+/-)

Deaf parents perception and understanding of the role of a Social Worker

11

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Legal proceedings can be improved by engaging the expertise of deaf professionals, independent social workers, and intralingual interpreters. This approach can help achieve better outcomes and reduce the time spent in court.
- Provision of domain-specific interpreter training to ensure that professionals working with deaf individuals in legal settings have the necessary skills and knowledge. This includes domain specific knowledge of child protection procedures, familiarity of jargon and of child development stages.
- Raise awareness among legal and social care professionals about the importance of involving deaf specialists in the pre-proceedings stage.
- Improved access to parenting courses for deaf parents.
- Further research is needed to understand the experiences of deaf parents during assessments by children and families social care teams. ([Oram, R., Young, A. & Cartney, P., 2024](#))
- It's important to acknowledge and value the lived experiences of deaf individuals.

12

REFERENCES

- Sign language interpreting services, A quick fix for inclusion?

[De Meulder. M., Hauland. H. 2019\)](#)

- Now you see them, now you don't: Professional recognition of specialist professionals working with Deaf British Sign Language parents in child safeguarding

[\(Oram, R., Young, A. & Cartney, P., 2024\)](#)

13



Wendy Anderson

Email: **add**

14