

Activity: Deafness and dementia

Effective communication is critical to early diagnosis and support for people with dementia.

Imagine you are working with a Deaf person who only communicates through British Sign Language (BSL) and who you think may be showing early signs of dementia.

List all the challenges that you can think of that a Deaf person may experience in relation to getting a diagnosis of dementia and then living well with dementia.

List what you think may be some of the potential solutions to these challenges.

Trainer's notes

This can be done as a group activity.

First ask participants to read through the feature carefully.

Brainstorm with the group about the difficulties that a Deaf person may experience in getting a diagnosis of dementia and living with dementia.

Some examples of difficulties mentioned should be accessible communication at the GP surgery, issues related to the use of interpreters in relation to privacy of information, accessible diagnostic tests and finding services that are suitable for supporting Deaf people with dementia.

Then again discuss as a group what are some solutions to these challenges. Discuss what, if anything, is available locally that is culturally suitable for Deaf people who may develop dementia.

Remember in all these discussions that there are significant cultural and language differences between people who are born Deaf and are BSL users – and those who lose their hearing later in life. These could be explored further through Deaf awareness training – ideally linked to QCF Awards, Certificate and Diploma.