

HEARING EQUIPMENT LEGISLATIONS.

The Human Rights Act (1998) guarantees everyone, including hearing impaired, fundamental rights and applies to public authorities including government departments, local authorities, courts, schools, hospitals, GP surgeries, prisons, public libraries and many more. If a deaf person believes their rights have been denied, they may be able to bring a case under the Act.

Care Standards Act (2000) demands that care homes provide residents a loop system and signs to assist the needs of all service users, for example those with hearing impairments where necessary. These requirements apply to all care homes providing accommodation and nursing or personal care for older people in England.

The Equality Act (2010) aims to protect disabled people including the hearing impaired. Under the Act, all service providers and those providing goods and facilities in Great Britain are required to make changes, where needed, to improve service for disabled customers or potential customers. There is a legal requirement to make reasonable changes to the way things are done, to the built environment and provide auxiliary aids and services (such as providing information in an accessible format, a hearing loop for customers with hearing aids, special computer software or additional staff support when using a service). Employers must also take measures to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged in the workplace.

Building Regulations Part M1: Access to and use of buildings (2013) state that newly erected or substantially reconstructed non-domestic buildings should make reasonable provision for people to gain access to and use their facilities. In particular 'aids to communication' should be provided for the hearing impaired in auditoria, meeting rooms, reception areas, ticket offices and at information points. According to the regulations, aids to communication will satisfy {part of} this requirement if 'a hearing enhancement system is installed in rooms and spaces designed for meetings, lectures, classes, performances... and at or reception counters when they are situated in noisy areas or behind glazed screens. The regulations acknowledge that a person with a hearing disability needs to receive a signal that is amplified in both volume and signal-to-noise ratio and that hearing loop, infrared, radio and sound field systems can provide this advanced level of sound. In larger spaces, provision needs to be made for a permanent system, but in a small meeting room, a portable hearing loop system would be acceptable.



w: www.west-comms.co.uk | t: 01726 73361 | e: admin@west-comms.co.uk

Unit 1 Buckers Lane, Holmbush, ST AUSTELL, Cornwall, PL25 3JN.

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