



INCLUSION - DEAF ATHLETES

Track and Field

Officials Conference 2024

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INTRODUCTION TO DEAF ATHLETICS

*12 million people in UK with hearing loss,
87,000 with British Sign Language as first
language*

- **Paralympic Pathway** / **Deaflympic Pathway** / **Olympic Pathway**
- Not formally recognised/funded by UK Sport and UK Government
- Deaflympics: 55dB hearing loss in better ear → audiogram



UKA RULING - STARTING SYSTEMS

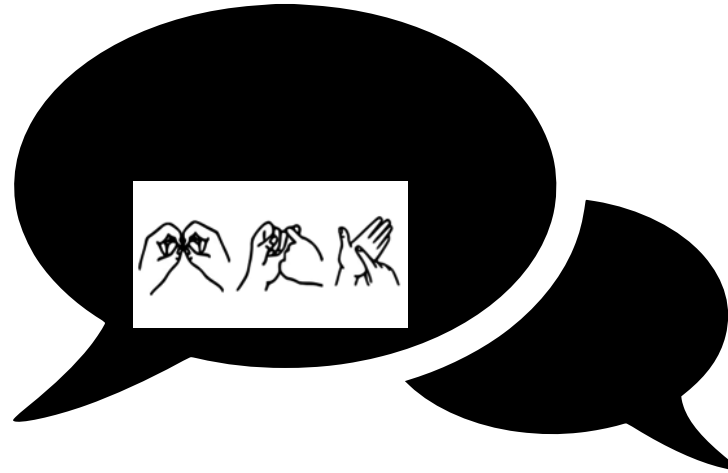
T15.4 The use of lights, by deaf or hearing-impaired athletes only, at the start of races is allowed and is not considered assistance. It should however be the obligation of the athlete or their team for the financing and supply of such equipment and its compatibility with the start system in use, unless at a particular meeting where there is an appointed technical partner who can provide it (p.133)

NOTE: If an athlete has a hearing impairment the Starter or their Assistant may use a flag, a strobe light or other visual device as well as a pistol to signal the start. In some circumstances, for athletes with both a vision and hearing impairment, an Official may touch an athlete to signal the start.

COMMON BARRIERS FOR DEAF ATHLETES



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CLUBS AND NETWORK



DEAF AWARENESS

Best practice:

- Face the athlete at all times
 - Appropriate lighting
- Reduce background noise if possible
 - Speak clearly
- Write things down
- Clear hand signals

What not do to:

- Shout
- Cover your mouth
- Ignore the athlete
- Talk too slow/fast
- Stand with backlight
- Talk to interpreter instead of deaf athlete

EXISTING PRACTICES



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APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

Appropriate:

- deaf
- Deaf
- Hard of hearing
 - Deafened
- Hearing impaired

Ask the athlete!

Inappropriate:

- Deaf and dumb
 - Deaf mute
- Deaf without speech

Do not use – outdated and offensive

HOW CAN OFFICIALS SUPPORT DEAF ATHLETES?



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Communication – *try your best*

Education – *willingness to learn*

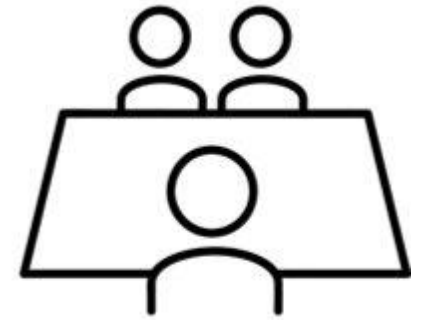
Awareness – *think of surroundings & possible barriers*

Patience – *take time with the athlete*

Person-centred – *ask them and listen*

RESEARCH IN DEAF ATHLETICS

No consistent and standardised starting system...reaction time
= crux alongside sociological considerations





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RESEARCH OUTCOME AND IMPACT

Identified a solution that would be applicable to deaf and hearing pathways → further research and product development



Equity, Access, Opportunity

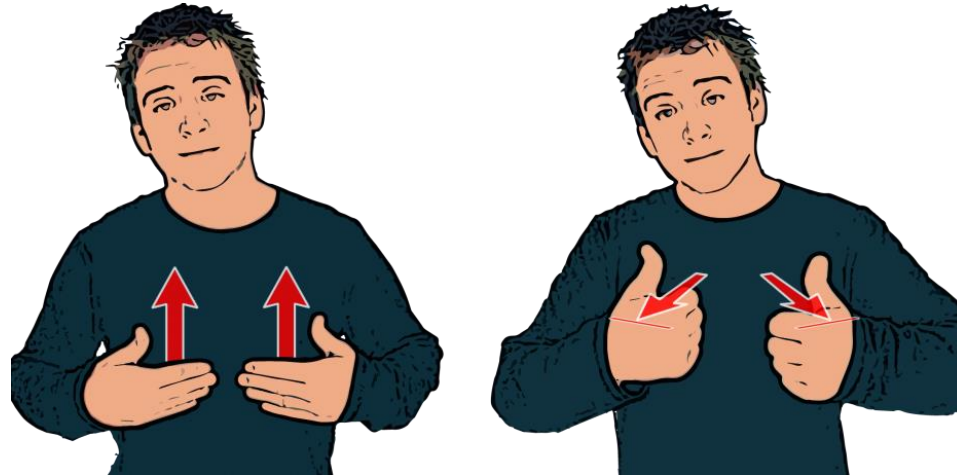


BASIC BSL SIGNS AND PHRASES

Hello



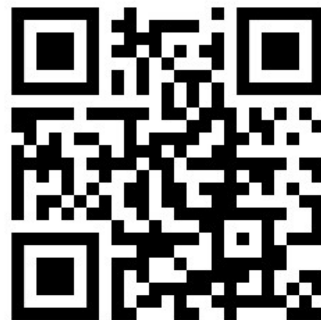
How are you?



Help?



BSL Dictionary



ATHLETICS BSL SIGNS



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Run

Jump

Throw

Bronze

Silver

Gold

ATHLETICS TERMINOLOGY



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Go

Wait

Fast(er)

Slow(er)

False Start

Disqualify

BSL NUMBERS 1-10



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BSL NUMBERS
ONE TO TEN



british-sign.co.uk



SIGNPOSTING AND RESOURCES

- Disability Sport Wales: Introduction to Deaf Sport
 - [Tuesday 19th March 1-2.30pm](#)
- Welsh Athletics Socials and Website
 - Athletics BSL Glossary and Content
- Useful resources
 - [UK Deaf Sport Deaf Awareness in Sport e-module](#)
 - [BSL Dictionary](#)
- Petition
 - [Provide dedicated funding to support deaf athletes - Petitions \(parliament.uk\)](#)

DSW Event



UKDS Module





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**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!
QUESTIONS?**

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