

## **Shane**

Born Deaf (with Waardenburg Syndrome)

### **Experiences of using healthcare**

Shane has been at his GP Surgery for six years. To see his doctor, Shane relies on his PA (Personal Assistant) using Tynetalk (the national telephone relay service for people with communication difficulties) to book a GP appointment.

Shane often has to wait between calling for an appointment and being able to attend an appointment with an interpreter which he feels can have an impact on his health. Even when an interpreter has been booked, they do not always attend the appointment. Shane often only finds out about the cancellation as he is sitting waiting in the GP reception.

Shane recalls two occasions where this happened. In one the appointment was cancelled, and he was sent home without seeing a GP and on the other occasion he told them he needed to see a GP and couldn't wait. He attended the appointment, and the GP wrote notes on paper which he then took home for his PA to translate into BSL.

At a recent hospital visit, staff were wearing masks which stopped Shane being able to lip read. Staff wouldn't write notes which was very stressful for Shane. He feels disappointed and concerned when he is unable to fully understand his own health conditions. At A&E when he asked for an emergency interpreter a nurse with limited BSL tried to help but was not very successful. Shane still visits the Audiology Department in Nottingham where he had his cochlear implant surgery, as he believes it is a better department and has expertise in communicating with him.

Shane has very positive experiences of interpreters being booked when he visits his dentist, with a face-to-face interpreter being present for most appointments.

### **Complaints**

Shane's PA has complained on his behalf, but he doesn't feel like he has seen any improvement. He would like the option to complain in British Sign Language and for someone to write it down. It seems like there may be some confusion between GPs, patients and receptionists about how and when interpreters should be booked.

### **Thoughts on changes and potential improvements**

It has been difficult, since COVID, to contact his GP by telephone as a deaf person.

Some people get funding for a PA, Shane doesn't as it is Means Tested.

When asked about how things could improve within healthcare Shane would like Interpreters to always be booked in advance and to attend appointments without cancellations, to avoid any health deterioration. His view is that there is an imbalance of access through communication and is worried about the health of deaf people in general.

Shane wouldn't mind being contacted by letter or text but would prefer information visually: in BSL. Shane has the BSL 999 Emergency App on his mobile phone.