

Deaf jurors supported by sign language interpreter for first time

- First Deaf jurors complete jury service with British Sign Language interpreter support
- Law change allows interpreters in the jury deliberation room as the thirteenth person
- Move opens jury service up to thousands more people

This summer, Karen – a volunteer at charity DeafCOG in London – became the first Deaf person to complete jury service with a BSL interpreter at Croydon Crown Court, deliberating over a racially aggravated harassment case. Karen was also chosen by the other members of the jury to act as the jury foreperson – the spokesperson responsible for announcing the verdict.

Others are now following in Karen's footsteps, including Paul who served on a serious sexual assault case at Norwich Crown Court last month. Both jurors had three interpreters who rotated every 20 minutes to assist them, as well as the full support of the judge and HM Courts and Tribunals Service staff.

The move follows changes brought in through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, which allow BSL interpreters into the jury deliberation room. It is expected that this will open up jury service to over 80,000 Deaf people across England and Wales.

Speaking about her experiences in court, Karen said:

My jury experience at Croydon Crown Court went smoothly and exceeded my expectations.

The staff, from the jury manager, ushers, clerks and judges were extremely aware of the needs of myself and the BSL interpreting team. I was made to feel included every step of the way.

An excellent and amazing opportunity for me and what a great start to leading the way for other Deaf jurors in the future, now that BSL is recognised as a language.

Paul said:

Being on jury duty has been a dream of mine and I believe the Deaf/BSL community has so much to offer. When the law changed to allow the Deaf/BSL community to sit on a jury, and I received my summons, naturally I was excited but nervous as I did not know what to expect.

Upon arriving at Norwich Crown Court, I was made to feel very

welcome and there were three BSL interpreters ready. It was surreal experience and the whole process was streamlined and smooth. The training was clear and easy to follow, then the trial began, and I was amazed that I was treated equally to other jurors. This gave me a sense of respect as the other jurors were keen to work with me and make me feel involved.

The trial ran over and the interpreters I had been working with were now unavailable. However, I was pleased to see the judge and court staff went above and beyond to find alternative interpreters for the rest of the trial. It was sorted without a hinderance. The judge requested feedback from me on how to improve for future cases and expressed a strong desire to make sure Norwich Crown Court is accessible and fair for all. I was deeply touched by this.

I was so honoured to be selected as the foreperson by other members of the jury, making me the first Deaf/BSL foreperson at Norwich Crown Court! It was a very empowering experience and I want to say thank you to everyone at the court and in the jury for making this possible. I look forward to seeing more of the Deaf/BSL community being part of the justice system, as it should be.

Guidance on working with jurors supported by BSL interpreters was provided to court staff, judges and other jury members to ensure they could communicate effectively with Karen and Paul, as well as the interpreters. Printed oaths for the interpreters were also placed in the courtrooms which contained new wording specific to not influencing, interfering or disclosing the deliberation of the jury.

Justice Minister Gareth Johnson said:

We are breaking down the barriers for Deaf people carrying out jury service, ensuring they can fully and equally participate in court proceedings.

I am delighted that the door is now open to thousands more potential jurors as we establish a more accessible and inclusive justice system for all.

Work and Pensions Secretary Chloe Smith said:

The first Deaf juror completing jury service is an historic moment on our path towards a more inclusive and accessible society. I am so glad to hear of Karen's positive experience whilst undertaking an important act of public service.

Earlier this year the British Sign Language Act became law, and I'm delighted to see that our work to recognise BSL as a language is fulfilling its promise to help remove barriers faced by the D/deaf

community.

The move has been well-received within the Deaf community.

Mark Atkinson, Chief Executive at RNID, said:

RNID and our supporters are delighted that deaf BSL users can now serve on juries and are no longer excluded from this act of citizenship. This move will allow tens of thousands of deaf people who use BSL as their first language to take part in jury service, a duty which all of us should have a responsibility to undertake.

We are pleased to see another step forward towards inclusion for the Deaf community, yet there are still many barriers which exist for deaf BSL users in society. We're pleased to see this positive step, and eagerly anticipate many more barriers being broken as Government works towards the delivery of the British Sign Language Act.

David Buxton, British Deaf Association Chair, said:

After decades of campaigning, the 87,000 Deaf people in the UK whose first or preferred language is BSL are now finally able to serve as jurors alongside their hearing fellow citizens.

We are pleased that the Ministry of Justice has recognised that a BSL interpreter is there to support the Deaf juror, rather than to act as a thirteenth juror. Interpreters follow a strict professional Code of Conduct which prevents them from influencing the judicial process in any way.

This represents a crucial and long overdue step forward in the equality, inclusion and participation of Deaf people in our democracy, combined with the BSL Act – which passed on the same day in April 2022 – recognising British Sign Language as a language of Great Britain in law for the first time.

Barriers to Deaf people's full democratic participation remain – we have yet to see the election of a Deaf MP – but we hope that this important step demonstrates the potentially huge contribution that the Deaf community in the UK can make to our society when reasonable adjustments such as BSL interpreters are provided as standard.

We look forward to continue working with the Government to break down further unnecessary barriers and challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices in future.

Notes to Editors

- According to the [British Deaf Association](#), an estimated 87,000 people in the UK use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language.
 - In order to comply with GDPR, jurors are identified by first name only.
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Chevening 2022/2023 cohort's pre-departure event in Windhoek

World news story

BHC Windhoek hosted a pre-departure event for 11 Namibian scholars embarking on their academic journeys to the UK on Chevening scholarships.



British High Commissioner to Namibia, HE Charles Moore pictured with 10 of the 11 Namibian scholars selected for the prestigious Chevening Scholarship for the 2022/2023 academic year.

The British High Commission Windhoek organised a pre-departure briefing event for the newly announced Chevening scholarship recipients from Namibia. The event served as an informative session conducted to provide scholars with a platform to exchange valuable and meaningful information pertaining to living and studying in the UK, in order to ease their transition. Additionally the event also provided a good opportunity for the new scholars to network with other each other and meet alumni from previous Chevening Cohorts.

After attending the pre-departure briefing event, British High Commissioner to the Republic of Namibia, Charles Moore, hosted a celebratory reception for the newly selected candidates at his residence in Windhoek. Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals from all backgrounds who can demonstrate that they have the commitment and skills required to create positive change, and can show how a UK master's degree will help them do that.

The scholarship offers full financial support for scholars to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional and cultural experiences.

The 11 Namibian scholars that have been awarded fully funded Chevening scholarships for the 2022/2023 academic year are:

- Nelao Eufrazia Endjala
- Joachim Natangwe Angombe
- Immanuel Tangi Shilamo
- Zach Kauraisa
- Tshandyemwene Renatte Tshivolo
- Junias Amunyela
- Nguundja Mercia Desminola Uamburu
- Ester Nanyanga Kayala
- Matuikuani Nicolene Dax
- Hamilton Simasiku Sikwana
- Ndamono Shikoyeni

BHC Windhoek commissioned a chocolate cake with the names of the 11 selected candidates from Namibia.

The selected scholars have chosen courses in the top universities in the UK including:

- University of Glasgow
- Robert Gordon University
- Birbeck University of London
- Queen Mary University of London
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Exeter
- Aberystwyth University
- University of London

Since the program was created in 1983, over 50,000 professionals have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2023/2024 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment towards developing the leaders of tomorrow.

Published 28 September 2022

[Transport Secretary calls for](#)

international action to decarbonise global aviation

- Transport Secretary will call on countries worldwide to agree long-term goal for reducing aviation carbon emissions
- earlier this week, the UK led a meeting of 56 states pushing for higher ambition to tackle aviation's climate impacts
- government continues to deliver on COP26 commitments

Decarbonising the aviation sector requires global action, new Transport Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan will tell the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly in Montreal today (28 September 2022).

The UK is attending the assembly with the aim of reaching agreements that help secure the sustainability and resilience of global aviation.

During the Transport Secretary's opening statement, ICAO – the United Nations' body in charge of ensuring aviation is safe, secure and environmentally friendly – will be urged to adopt a long-term goal to clean up the sector and reduce its emissions in line with the Paris Agreement.

The Secretary of State for Transport will also highlight the need for countries around the world to learn lessons from the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure the global aviation sector is better prepared for future threats, such as public health crises.

Her intervention comes after the [International Aviation Climate Ambition Coalition](#), launched by the UK at COP26, met on Monday in Montreal.

Now bringing together governments from 56 countries across the world, the coalition calls for ambitious action by ICAO and is committed to promoting the use of new fuels and technologies to tackle aviation's contribution to climate change.

Transport Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan is expected to say:

We value international aviation's important contribution to global commerce, travel and tourism and to economic growth globally. Now it must do so sustainably. Failure here puts the future of aviation itself at risk.

We cannot ignore the threat that rising temperatures pose to our planet. This year alone we have seen extreme weather events affect all of our regions.

As one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions, aviation has an important role to play in tackling climate change.

Suzi Kerr, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, Environmental Defense Fund, said:

There's a bright future ahead where we can all thrive in a stable climate and where we can chart a more sustainable flight path while protecting ecosystems and supporting communities.

Now is the time for countries to set a long-term path, define waypoints and ambition in the short term and enhance transparency and cooperation. Coordination and cooperation, such as through the International Aviation Climate Ambition Coalition and engagement with civil society are critical to this effort.

The assembly will be asked to agree to focus on new aircraft technologies and unlocking the full potential of sustainable aviation fuels on a global scale.

The push for stronger international action comes after the government published its [Jet Zero strategy](#) in July, which set out how UK aviation will achieve net zero emissions by 2050 through new fuels, technologies and other measures, and made clear how crucial international action and collaboration through ICAO is to effectively address aviation's emissions.

The UK has also committed to introduce a [sustainable aviation fuels](#) (SAF) mandate from 2025, requiring at least 10% of jet fuel to be from sustainable sources by 2030, with increasing proportions of SAF blended from 2025.

Turning to support for Ukraine, the Transport Secretary will reaffirm the UK's continued condemnation of the Russian government's reprehensible actions which violate international law, the UN Charter and global aviation rules.

[£1.3 million in contracts awarded to fund telexistence technologies](#)

- £1.3 million overall funding allocated to three innovative organisations to develop telexistence technologies
- Funding achieved through [Telexistence: Phase 2](#), run on behalf of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)
- Telexistence: Phase 2 sought innovations to develop a complete telexistence system, integrating telepresence, robotic and haptic technologies on to a single platform

The [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#) (Dstl), the [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority](#) (NDA) and the [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) are pleased to announce that three innovators have won a share of £1.3

million funding to develop cutting edge telexistence systems.

Telexistence technology has the potential to give those working in hazardous environments the capability to undertake tasks without physically being present, which can decrease risk and reduce the logistical burden associated with dangerous operations. Innovators were tasked with evaluating their innovations against use cases in:

- Specialist Nuclear Decommissioning Tasks
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Defence and Security Medical applications

Mark Hodder, Project Manager, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory said:

The DASA Telexistence: Phase 2 competition has been a great success in finding the latest innovators to collaborate with Dstl and NDA to develop a complete system using science and technology to integrate and create a platform using Telepresence, Robotics and Haptics together to achieve results.

Andrew Gray, Innovation Delivery, Manager Nuclear Decommissioning Authority said:

We are excited to be working with DASA and Dstl on this competition. Advancing technologies in the area of telexistence will help us deliver our decommissioning mission more safely, securely and efficiently in enabling us to move humans away from harm. It's our aim to reduce decommissioning activities carried out by humans in hazardous environments by 50% by 2030. We are really encouraged to see such fantastic solutions being put forward by the supply chain.

Congratulations to the Telexistence: Phase 2 winners

Four projects from 3 innovators have been awarded Telexistence: Phase 2 funding to fast-track their novel ideas. The winners are:

TNO

TNO's innovation HaBiTS, (Haptic Bimanual Telexistence System), comprised of robotic arms and effectors, aims to provide NDA operators with a high sense of telexistence and with the critical visual, auditory, and haptic cues required for effective, efficient, and safe task execution.

Sheffield University

The University of Sheffield's MediTel (Medical Telexistence Platform) aims to

deliver next generation medical telexistence technologies that integrate telepresence, robotics, and haptic technologies on one platform. This will help enable real time user interaction with remote environments and consultant interfaces to enhance Combat Medic Technician and Regimental Aid Post capabilities to reduce human risk of injury. The project is a collaboration between the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) and the Faculty of Engineering departments of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering (ACSE) and Sheffield Robotics.

Cyberselves Universal Ltd.

Cyberselves are undertaking two projects aligned to different use cases, but using similar system components. Project one, TEL-ND, aims to design a cutting-edge telexistence solution that removes NDA operators from risk. The innovation enables operators to carry out their tasks remotely from a location remotely, utilising a robot, without adversely impacting performance.

Project two, TEL-MED, aims to design an innovative telexistence product that allows a thinly spread medical workforce to be present in multiple places at once while also removing them from radioactive, chemical or biologically compromised environments.

Telexistence: Phase 2 funded projects will run over the next 10 months and be placed through a series of representative trials, with results delivered in summer 2023.

What happened in Telexistence: Phase 1

Telexistence: Phase 2 follows on from Phase 1, where £570K worth of contracts was awarded to:

- Veolia Nuclear Solutions
- Cyberselves Universal Ltd.
- Createc
- L3Harris Technologies, Inc – Robotics Division
- Holoxica Limited
- University of Leeds
- TNO
- Centre of Excellence in Terrorism, Resilience, Intelligence and Organised Crime Research (CENTRIC) at Sheffield Hallam University
- Digital Kinematics Ltd

Telexistence: Phase 1 aimed to understand the technical possibilities and potential applications of a telexistence capability for the defence and security community.

[Learn more here.](#)

Contacting the Patient Safety Commissioner for England

News story

Dr Henrietta Hughes began her role as the Patient Safety Commissioner for England on 12 September 2022.



Dr Henrietta Hughes was appointed as the [first ever Patient Safety Commissioner for England](#) in July. She began her role on 12 September.

Dr Hughes is an independent point of contact for patients so that patients' voices are heard and acted upon. She will use patients' insight to help the government and the healthcare system in England listen and respond to patients' views and promote patient safety, specifically with regard to medicines and medical devices.

For more information on the role of the Patient Safety Commissioner see the [fact sheet](#) and the [government's response to a consultation regarding the post](#).

The [privacy notice](#) sets out how the Patient Safety Commissioner collects and uses personal data to fulfil the role.

Published 28 September 2022