



House of Commons
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SW1A 0AA

Sarah Champion
Member of Parliament for Rotherham

Immediate release
21 May 2014

Sarah calls for better provision for Rotherham's deaf people

Sarah Champion MP has spoken out on the difficulties faced by deaf people in accessing local banking services. Sarah, who is the MP for Rotherham, has written to all banks operating in Rotherham asking them to ensure their staff are aware of how to support a deaf person coming in to their branch.

Sarah's action coincides with Deaf Awareness Week, which runs until Sunday 25th May. People that are born deaf speak British Sign Language as their first language, making English their second language. Sarah recently met with Rotherham's Deaf Futures group to discuss the issues affecting them, and has taken action on their behalf.

In her letter to the banks, Sarah says: "Most deaf people speak British Sign Language as a first language and often do not have strong literacy skills. This has led to difficulty in managing their finances, as letters they receive are often extremely complex. When they have contacted their branch to discuss matters, they have frequently struggled to arrange interpreters and as so have been left unable to properly understand or resolve issues.

"Many banks do offer interpreter services but my discussions with the group have shown this is often a frustrating process."

Speaking afterwards, Sarah added: "I was saddened to hear about the difficulties deaf people have in accessing basic services like banking. I have asked the banks to provide information on what services they provide to deaf customers, and in particular, how they ensure their local branch staff know about those services. It is very important that all local branch staff are trained in how they can help their deaf customers."

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Notes to Editors

- National Deaf Awareness Week runs from May 19th to May 25th

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