

## Communicating with patients with a visual impairment or hearing loss

### Top tips

#### Supporting people with visual impairment

- Make your handwriting more legible by choosing a dark felt tip pen and write neatly using thicker strokes.
- Show the person where the toilet, call button, etc. are, rather than giving directions.
- Encourage people to bring in their usual aids.

#### Supporting people with hearing loss

- Face the person directly – if you look away the deaf person cannot see your lips.
- Make sure you have good light on your face – so the person can see your features and read your lips easily.
- Use whole sentences rather than one word replies – lip reading is 70% guess-work and many words look the same. Using sentences gives contextual clues.
- Speak clearly and at a normal pace – do not shout.
- Use gestures to help explain what you are saying – use gestures, point or mime to help explain what you are saying e.g. show a cup and ask what they want to drink.
- Be patient – if you are asked to repeat something, try changing the sentence slightly, it may make it easier to understand.
- Do not give up – if you cannot make yourself understood then write it down or draw what you mean.

- If the person is a sign language user, they will probably still expect to have to lip-read your reply – very few hearing people sign, and deaf people are used to communicating with hearing people.
- Provide any information in an accessible format.