

SmartSafe signing: deaf inclusion in domestic violence and abuse support and the criminal justice system

Exploring if/how the role of technology can facilitate an expedient process of access to support within the criminal justice system and policing for deaf victims of domestic abuse.

Key details

Lead institution	University of Wolverhampton
Principal researcher(s)	Dr Karlie Stonard and Dr Christopher Stone research.map@college.police.uk
Police region	West Midlands
Collaboration and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Midlands Police• West Midlands Women's Aid• SignHealth
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	February 2025
Date due for completion	January 2027

Research context

Dr Karlie Stonard (Senior Lecturer in Criminology) and Dr Christopher Stone (Reader in Interpreting and Translation) from the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences, along with an ex-colleague from the University of Wolverhampton, Dr John McDaniel (now a Lecturer in Crime and Criminal Justice at Lancaster University) will be working with local domestic abuse support services, West Midlands Police and a national deaf charity based in London, SignHealth.

The project is due to start in early 2025 and will explore if and how the role of technology (that is, video-interpreter technology) can facilitate a more expedient process of access to support and the criminal justice system (CJS), and/or whether D/deaf victims, police and professionals supporting such victims feel that such interpreter-technology would be useful or indeed, desired by the parties involved.

Additionally, we would like to explore the potential role and impact of new uses of technology within this context.

Research methodology

The methodology is qualitative, cross-sectional research using semi-structured interviews (and/or focus groups if this is requested by participants). The data will be analysed using thematic analysis.

Research participation

Target participants are police officers, independent domestic violence advocates (Women's Aid), staff from SignHealth (deaf charity/organisation), and D/deaf victims-survivors themselves.

Tags

- [Vulnerable people](#)
- [Domestic abuse](#)
- [Domestic violence](#)