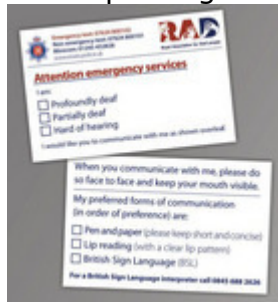


New emergency text service

New emergency text service for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired introduced today, Monday, July 6.

Now, instead of ringing 999 in an emergency, they can text a message to 07624 800102 and receive a similar priority service.

However, members of the public must register to use the service, which is designed for those who are d/deaf - an all-encompassing term to denote everyone with a hearing-related disability - and/or speech-impaired.



Anyone wishing to register for the emergency text service can do so by:

- filling in a form online - visit www.essex.police.uk and click on the Text Messaging link under How To Contact Us on the front page
- contacting the Essex Police switchboard on 0300 333 4444 and asking for an emergency text registration form
- visiting their local police station front office and asking for one.

Once registered, they will receive a special ID card, sponsored by Essex Police Authority.

The card states the condition its bearer has and their preferred form of communication, as well as details of how to contact Essex Police.

Police officers and staff should be aware of these cards as speech-impaired and d/deaf members of the public are being advised to present them when talking to the police.

The force worked closely with the Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) and liaised with The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to set up the service.