



## **Promoting D/deaf Awareness Zoom Good Practice for the Liberal Judaism Family**

Liberal Judaism's response to the sheer awfulness of Covid-19 has been positive, productive and innovative. It has brought us closer together in so many ways as we cautiously adapt to life online. Synagogue services, community meetings and events are now more accessible and inclusive than ever.

People living with physical or mental health issues, people living a long distance from a Liberal Judaism community and people not affiliated to any community now have the option to dip in and have a look without pressure from anyone chasing them to 'sign-up'! Zoom, Google and other platforms are a gift, but like the best gifts we need to be mindful to use them effectively to get the best results.

Hearing loss affects twelve million people in the UK: one in six people is deaf or has a hearing loss. That is quite a lot of people! Be mindful there is still a stigma or shame attached to D/deafness. This is sometimes in the mind of the person who is D/deaf, and who as a result might not disclose that they have difficulty hearing.

### **D/deaf Awareness Good Practice**

- 'Listening' is hard work for a D/deaf person: it requires total concentration. It helps not to speak too fast. Please try not to set out too many ideas at once.
- Your face needs to be clearly seen to enable someone to lip-read and interpret your facial expression including your eyes - this is crucial.
- Sit so that you are in the centre of the screen. Your head and shoulders should take up no more or no less than one-third of the screen, with the top of your head near the top of the screen.
- It is a good idea to decide in advance of a meeting where you will locate yourself, taking into account lighting and background. Avoid sitting with your back to a window and avoid sunlight otherwise you will look like an apparition! Place yourself in a well-lit space with your laptop or device on a firm surface to avoid a wobbling screen.
- Look directly at the centre of the screen, do not look up or down.
- Speak to the microphone as closely as possible.
- Think about what you are wearing; someone wearing a white shirt in front of a plain white/magnolia wall will not work well.
- Ensure that you have a strong internet connection.
- It is not vain to have a Zoom training session with yourself by setting up a meeting and trying out different spaces at home to see what works well.

If you follow the advice on lighting and you speak directly to the microphone and look straight at the centre of your screen, relax, be yourself, and do not shout, you will soon be an effective Zoom communicator!