This is a transcription of seminar held online on 24 September 2024, chaired by Prof Jemina Napier of the EDI Caucus. The words transcribed were spoken by the interpreters in the event. If you wish the original sign language, please view the video. Headings have been used to facilitate navigation in this document.

# Administrative Introduction

Jemina: Okay Andy if you can start voicing over for me, I'm going to just say hello to everybody, we'll welcome everybody into the webinar- we'll wait one more minute before we make a formal start just so that everyone can arrive. As you can see from the participant list people have started to do so thank you very much, I just didn't want anybody sitting there wondering why silence was pervading. It's great to see so many different people joining us today from all sorts of different places - I recognize some names there's some names that aren't familiar so it looks like we've got a good mixed deaf and hearing audience and nice diverse audience- so 30 people so far have joined okay looking at the time I think it's probably best that we get started we have a very full schedule for this afternoon hopefully people will join us as and when they can but I think we should get on with the introductions so people, when they do join, can just join for the actual meat of the discussion. So!

Hello everybody welcome my name is Jemina Napier - that's my name in sign language - I work here at Heriot-Watt University I'm a professor working in sign language and interpreting studies but I am part of the EDI Caucus as the deputy PI of that research project and we'll explain a little bit more about that soon but a few housekeeping things first of all before we get going. I hope that you can see me nice and clearly. We are using British sign language for this seminar it will be completely in British sign language. You can hear interpretation -there is a male voice at the moment currently rendering interpretations, we have another female interpreter working for this afternoon's webinar and they'll be taking it in turn so I'd like to thank Andy and Susan for their interpretation and their work throughout this session so that everybody can have access. you can also turn on captions if you want.

Just to let you know we will be recording this session today it will be available and on the EDICa website after this event so if you know people that will be interested in the content and the topic here and couldn't make it, please do pass on the message and we'll share the link that this will be available after the fact and please pass on that message to everybody that you think would be interested. Also towards the end of this session after some structured questions and debate there will be time- we will invite people to ask questions make comments and we'll have some discussion hopefully, we ask that people please do type their questions into the chat box that would be the easiest way of doing it so that's there is a Q&A function that's distinct for webinars so please use that, If there's any problem with technology, you can just use the chat function to let us know. We have Fenella here this afternoon she's helping us with all the technological side of things so she's working busy behind the scenes so if you've got any problems, please do let us know in the chat if there are any technical issues. Questions should be in the Q&A but if you prefer to use British sign language to ask your question you can put your hand up or put something in the chat and Fenella will allow you to become a panellist in order that you can turn your camera on and ask your question and then she'll kick you back off the panel once you've asked a question so you're a regular participant again. So, if you do want to ask a question in BSL that is absolutely fine, we encourage it, so the questions please in BSL or written English. We won't be allowing spoken English questions for this webinar.

Okay so in a moment I'm going to be sharing a PowerPoint and some slides which will explain what we're going to go through this afternoon. Once that's done I'll introduce you to the panel members and throughout all of us will keep our cameras on so there are four panel members plus myself so you should see five tiles on your screen you can then choose whether you want to highlight our Spotlight signers whoever is contributing we're not going to do any of that - we're going to leave the five tiles throughout so you can either watch in gallery mode or speaker mode. Fenella could we please start sharing slides.

great I don't know maybe - look, people can Spotlight me if they particularly want to while I go through this description - next slide please. Just so that you know, it's important that in EDICa we have a code of conduct within the project to ensure that other meetings and seminars are safe spaces for everybody- we want to encourage people in asking questions to be respectful, to use respectful language, to think about how they ask questions - if anybody is engaging in harassing or inappropriate behaviour they will be ejected from this meeting in order that we retain the boundaries of our safe space. Next slide please. So this is the plan for today - as you can see I'm doing the introductions, the welcoming, the housekeeping right now, we'll give you a brief overview of what the EDICa Project's about, introduce the panel, have the discussion, and then have the Q&A as you would expect and we hope we should be finished by 4:30 at UK time. I've done that, we can move on again. Okay so here we are.

# Panel introductions

Jemina: I'm going to now introduce the four panellists that we have with us for this afternoon session... (how should you sign it?) anyway, the panel. The first person that I'd like to introduce to you is **Dr Mette Sommer Lindsay**. She and I work together here at Heriot-Watt University. She finished her PhD at Heriot-Watt and is now working -- she did work in a different University for her postdoc, and then she's returned to us at Heriot-Watt where she now works part-time as a lecturer and assistant professor welcome to Mette. I'm just going to follow what I can see on the screen, so next is Emma.

**Dr Emma Ferguson Coleman** - now she's got a new job just recently. She's a lecturer in dementia and aging and she's now at the University of West London (sorry, west is that way, isn't it?) yes, the West of London. She was previously a researcher at the University of Manchester for many years, so she's just moved so congratulations on getting the new position Emma.

Emma: Thank you.

Jemina: Next we have **Dr Luigi Lerose**. He is a senior lecturer and research fellow in Sign Language at the University of Central Lancaster, or UCLan as we often call it, so hi and welcome to Luigi!

And last but not least is **Ixone Saenz Paraiso**. Now she's a PhD student at a university the Pompeu Fabra, over in Spain, but she has lived and worked in the UK for a substantial amount of time, if I'm correct.

Ixone: I'm still living in the UK! I'm still living here, studying there, but thank you for having me.

Jemina: Excellent. Okay thanks all four of you to agreeing to become a panellist for this afternoon. You've all got slightly different career trajectories or different stages of your career in terms of being a deaf academic, so I'm really interested to hear your stories and to learn about your experiences. Can I have the next slide please. Okay so very quickly about what the EDI Caucus is or EDICa. More information can be found on the website of the project. Can I have the next slide.

# Introducing the EDI Caucus

So, this is a funded project as you can see by the UKRI, there are different funding councils within the UKRI, and also the British Academy is a joint funder of this project so it's a three-year project the Caucus. So really the aim of the funding is to try and strengthen and bolster and support the researchers who are either working at University or perhaps researchers who are in a research role but not in the university to support people who are working in these fields who are experiencing barriers or feeling marginalized or being marginalized in their workplaces. So we're really seeking to promote acceptance of diversity within research disciplines in Academia and outside of Academia so we're delving into people's experiences and then creating from that resources so that we will be producing some "interventions" -is the technical term- so really support strategies and mechanisms so that institutions can understand how better to support researchers from different backgrounds. It's only a three-year project and we're hoping that the Caucus will generate new ideas, new ways of thinking about how we can encourage inclusion and diversity in the research Workforce. Okay next slide. So really there's three main objectives of the project, as you can see from this slide we'll be collecting evidence - that will give us insight and hopefully influence the funders in terms of making sure that they allocate funding in a more fair way in the future and understand that people experience barriers when it comes to getting research funding. Also we have three work streams so there's research going on within the project - I'm not going to go into the detail of that, once again you can go to the website if you're interested in more information and we want to promote interdisciplinary approaches to research when it comes to EDI issues. Okay next slide please.

So why is the EDI Caucus here relevant to that. Researchers - well, I think we can all understand quite clearly that if we want to uplift the lived experiences of people who have experienced marginalization and are from different backgrounds within the general research workspace, it's going to be very important to have seminars, to have education, we've got others on black researchers, on researchers with neurodiversity, and it's about giving a voice to researchers from specific backgrounds. Now we don't only want to talk about issues and problems and barriers. We're interested in hearing strategies, tactics, experiences - how people have navigated the different tiers of their career as they've gone through them, so that others can learn and also we become more insightful about what experiences we have in common, what experiences we have that are different, really the diversity of us \*within\* the research Workforce. Next slide. So, there are five questions that we've prepared, and we've already sent to the panel members. So, we have four panel members, five questions they've been thinking recently about how they're going to answer that. I'll be asking each of them in turn these questions. So, the first of those is "what structural barriers have they experienced in academia that they think are specific to being deaf". Of course, our panellists are women or other disabilities but we're trying to specify barriers that are as a result of deafness. The second question is "what strategies have you used to navigate those?" The third is "do we think that deaf researchers have the same opportunities as their hearing counterparts that are not deaf". Can they network, can they become involved in committees, manage projects, all these different arenas of academic life and university life in the workspace. "Do deaf academics have the same opportunities?" The fourth question that we're going to ask is "who would you say are your most effective allies in the world of Academia?" And then the last question that we have for our panellist is "do the general EDI policies in Academia give us the necessary framework to support deaf researchers in terms of what they need?" So, we'll be looking specifically whether those needs are covered by general EDI principles and practices. Okay at this point we can get rid of the slides thank you, so we can very much focus on the sign language and you're going to hear a lot less from me from now on. We've got a different order of panellists to respond for each of the questions, so I better make sure that I follow the plan.

# Question 1: what structural barriers do you feel that you have experienced?

Okay here we go, so the first question. What structural barriers do you feel that you have experienced that are specifically linked to being deaf? So, Emma is our first respondent off you go.

## Emma

Emma: Thank you very much for your warm welcome. I'm delighted to be part of this panel. Just talking about my own experience as a deaf woman within the academic space. Firstly, hearing privilege -- very prevalent within academic institutions. There are assumptions made of me as a deaf person, you know, am I able to progress? Am I able to do this? And there are inherent attitudes. I'm a deaf BSL user, I'm working with a sign language interpreter. They assume that it is the interpreter who has been the person that wrote my thesis and I have to say this is \*my\* PhD, not the interpreter's PhD, and I wrote it myself, so there are number of assumptions that I, as a deaf BSL user, cannot. So, I have to challenge that and say I can, and I have to give explanation for that. In addition, working with BSL interpreters, I would like to book a number of interpreters within different domains for my work, but interpreters are hesitant- they feel that it's too academic for them. "I don't know the vocabulary", "I don't know the language to use in that setting". So that interpreting anxiety then reflects on me, and I become anxious within that environment, checking that they're okay, and it's really about me - you know - I'm attending a meeting and that becomes a structural barrier for me because I'm concerned about that.

Jemina: It's very interesting thanks very much for that Emma. Why don't we go to Luigi next.

## Luigi

Luigi: Thank you, I'm also really excited to be a member of this panel and in response to that first question I think that really going back to before I did my PhD -- well, when finishing my PhD, and starting working in Academia, at registering for access to work, all that structural thing about organizing the interpreters, it didn't happen immediately, there was a large gap... I didn't know how to navigate what was going on, I didn't understand the landscape. I was getting interpreted during my PhD, the moment it finished, I moved to a different University, and the rules all changed. There weren't processes and procedures in place; I didn't have a network; I didn't have anybody to contact; I didn't understand the systems; I didn't know who was going to pay; I didn't understand that there were government schemes; I had \*no\* idea how to navigate all that aspect of my professional life, so I struggled a great deal after I finished my PhD. Also, the preponderance of the English language obviously is a barrier - the amount of administrative paperwork is quite overwhelming- even when you apply for funding! I mean it's incredible! the amount of duplication and the complexity- it's easy to become lost and to lose your navigation. I think that's an extra barrier that I've experienced particularly as a deaf researcher and as a deaf academic.

Jemina: Once again, so that's Emma and Luigi raising the issue of working with interpreters, so that's something. People in the audience if you're not entirely sure about what Access to Work is, this is a government scheme or system in the UK whereby anybody who needs accommodations in their workplace can apply for funding from the government scheme so that they get access to the workplace. Now you apply for interpreters, note-takers, equipment, a whole host of different things in order that you're accommodated in the workplace and what we're quite clearly seeing is applying for that money to cover interpreting costs - the system exists but it's a complicated system and like Luigi was just saying it's very difficult to navigate - there's a lot of structural blocks in that process. Then, once you finally got the funding, trying to find appropriate interpreters is a whole other challenge. Anyway, I'd like to move on to Ixone next. And hopefully we get a slightly different view.

## Ixone

Ixone: as my colleagues have mentioned lack of funding for sign language interpreters is a main challenge for me, because that affects everything else. So, my learning curve for example is behind my hearing peers because perhaps I've not been able to find interpreters, or I have an administrative workload to take on alongside my studies. I don't have a straightforward trajectory in the same way as my hearing peers. In relation to funding I'm currently doing a PhD in Spain, and I've asked for funding for interpreters for interviewing hearing participants and the response is "well that's not part of your PhD program so there is no funding available". So, I'm studying my PhD, I need to interview people for my research, but the response is there's no funding available therefore I'm unable to conduct those interviews. The third thing what's interesting in the UK I mean I'm going back to when I was doing my MA in a UK university, I got my place and then I asked for DSA disabled students allowance. I'm originally from Spain and they said I could only have DSA if I had lived in the UK for a minimum of three years. Luckily, I already had, but I'm thinking of other European deaf students who are wanting to study at an English University then do they have to wait and live in the UK for 3 years before they can then apply for DSA go and study?

Jemina: That's an interesting point again - you know, going back to another aspect to funding if you come here from overseas to the UK, there's certain funding schemes that you can access for interpreting support but also I think, as you said, there can be hidden costs for doing your research. DSA funds students who if they're going on a course, a class, a lecture, those things are very clear but if you're a PhD student and you're out in the field, you might need interpreters for different reasons that are not in their normal parameters of what they fund, so that can then be difficult if we're talking about data collection, if there's no funding available for certain parts of the process, that is complicated. Mette.

## Mette

Mette: Hello everybody again thank you for inviting me to be on this panel, it's really interesting to be part of this discussion. I'm originally from Denmark, and in Denmark back in the day I thought well I wanted to be an academic and a researcher and get my PhD but the opportunities in my home country are really non-existent, to be honest! So, one thing that's really positive about the UK is that there are opportunities for deaf people to do PhDs and that's something for us to be able to aspire to and that's a great thing at a basic level. But then considering opportunities within that, you do need somebody to, in terms of the structural barriers, we grew up internalizing all of that oppression as deaf people, so we're always questioning and not having the confidence. In Denmark we really had an underlying belief that deaf people didn't and couldn't do a PhD, so to have these role models in the UK was, first of all, it was inspirational, and the attitude differs here - is so much better than it is in Denmark. So first moving to the UK I thought everything was going to be rosy but of course there are hidden barriers, underlying issues, people have talked about interpreting, but there's also I mean, realizing I think when you do a PhD you've also got to work for the University, you got to do marking, some teaching. I didn't realize that and that was a little unsettling about how I'd be seen as a deaf person. I didn't really believe in my own authority as a lecturer or a marker so there was quite a lot of insecurity and lack of confidence at the beginning of that process because of this huge structure -- and the structural barriers that we've internalized throughout our growing up as deaf people and I'm sure that there's a gendered perspective to this as well. I mean to talk about intersectionality, we need to think about that because I am a woman as well.

Jemina: Okay! Well the four of you have already provided interesting answers to that first question and I think it's important that we do talk about structures and the system and ways that things are set up where there's an assumption that everybody is hearing, that they can arrive in the workplace and navigate the workplace in that way. So, we are constantly having to negotiate and renegotiate about funding about the positionality of deaf researchers in the field, what we used to call deaf awareness, i.e. how much everybody else understands about what deaf people can do. I mean Emma made that comment about people thinking it was her interpreter that wrote the thesis and not believing. So, you're right Mette about the internalized structures and oppressions from the society and the field that we're in and a lack of awareness about deafness and disability so those barriers are there structurally.

# Question 2: what have you done to navigate barriers?

So that leads us very neatly on to our second question: "what have you done to navigate those barriers and you've been successful in your academic careers and I'm sure it's very much been an up and down journey for you, but have you got any strategies, tactics, or hints for how to navigate all of these issues. And the first respondent for this question would be Luigi.

## Luigi

Luigi: when I started work as a researcher in terms of opportunities to be part of things, if it, there was really a lack of awareness outside my own team so I mean we know that research is interdisciplinary - that that we should be able to go out of our field, but because of a lack of experience or awareness about deaf people that you have to be very strategic about how you get access to that - what information you feed people so that they are aware and inclusive enough so that as a deaf academic you can be involved in all sorts of different areas, and obviously role modelling for them, deaf awareness- those sorts of things can help. I also grab the opportunity at the end of formal sessions when interpreters are there to explain about deaf experiences just to give that extra informal knowledge on a personal level and if you build rapport with people and have that drip drip effect, you can educate those outside your own field so that we can then access those fields. We shouldn't just assume that everybody understands our lived experience because they of course are coming from a very different place. So, you have to take responsibility to drip feed them information in order that you can then build rapport in relationships.

Jemina: (I'm just going to wait for the interpreter to catch up, here he is!) Okay thanks a lot for that Luigi it sounds like you avoid proselytising to people because you don't want them just to shut down and be overwhelmed or scared (if I can say that word) and so this drip drip effect allows people just to develop their understanding of deaf people - that fear of deaf people - so I kind of understand your caution in that regard. Ixone, what do you think?

## Ixone

Ixone: as a PhD student, if I have people in the same group, I have to network, it's part of the process is to collaborate, and if I miss something, we have a sort of agreement that they will get me through or I can ask my supervisor are there other budgets that could potentially fund my interpreting? So, it's a lot of labour for me, a lot of thinking of alternative strategies, and thinking "can this funding cover this?" "Can this other funding pot cover this?" So it's about collaborating with my peers and also thinking about alternative funding, because also I have to make sure that the interpreters I have are the right interpreters, the ones that I can trust, and if there are you know, if there are any issues, then I can rely on them to advocate for me. Sometimes in reality there is advocacy that I get from a good interpreter, that I feel we have a good relationship with. Sometimes it's not about that kind of relationship, it's just someone who does the job. They are in a co-working relationship rather than in advocacy or supportive mentoring relationship with me.

Jemina: Okay so a slightly different strategy that you're talking about, that's interesting. Luigi's talked about drip feeding gradual awareness and you're talking a bit more about navigating ways to find funding to pay for interpreters and also develop relationships with interpreters. And it goes back to what Emma at the beginning was saying that if an interpreter is anxious then that spills over to her and makes her anxious, so this time to develop relationships reduces concern and anxiety and allows you then to focus on your job. In fact, it's Mette that I've got down next to talk about this one.

## Mette

Mette: Well I think with my PhD I give the example of there not being any opportunities in Denmark so I had to move to a different country just to get the opportunity so that was a strategic decision on my part, and obviously Brexit was going on so it was even more of a challenge. you know, I don't know you if that people will want-- to do a PhD is a powerful step. If you want to work in academia of course and to get that doctorate is a significant achievement, it gives you much better chances of getting jobs, of having an academic career. Before having a PhD, I didn't work in Academia, I did a bit of research out in the community, but getting my doctorate was the main thing, so I recommend that to everybody. That's the most important thing. I mean Jemina was one of my supervisors but I mean during that, we can encourage other deaf PhDs and academics and for me, it's been absolutely a game changer and I think it's very important to bear in mind your motivations for applying for a PhD and to make sure that you're doing that.

Jemina: I was just thinking about what you're saying there, because at Heriot-Watt we've had a number of deaf people come and do PhDs I think only one of them is British. Almost everybody has been overseas. We've had you from Denmark, we've had a Belgian PhD, an Austrian now... American. So most of our PhD students at Heriot-Watt, we've obviously encouraged people to come from other countries, and we've been really \*lucky\* so far - touch wood - that the university has been very supportive and they believe that it's important to support deaf sign language-using PhD candidates so they do provide a lot of support and meet the costs when the barriers are experienced in terms of the systems and what's available, so we're very lucky we can rely on the University supporting \*overseas\* PhD students, so that's really interesting because of course I hadn't thought until just then that almost all of you have come from a different country. Emma.

## Emma

Emma: absolutely right, there is that network in Heriot-Watt and I have the same experience at the University of Manchester, an environment where you felt that others had the same experience in terms of navigating the academic pathways. And without that, I don't think I would still be in Academia. And that was both hearing and deaf allies which had experienced that path, and it made me determined to be part of it and that's meant that the barriers just fell down and my journey as a result was easier. I'm not saying it was an easy journey, it was easier, and I had to say thank you to them because they had experienced the journey before me. They were able to assist me when in relationships with interpreters and now new students are coming through then I'm able to pass on my knowledge and my experience to those who are coming after me and I think sharing experience is an important part of the process and networking. Ixone talked about the collaboration with interpreters. Absolutely, I fully agree. I like to decide that we are in this together and have that attitude rather than you are placed here for a moment and out you go. I'm learning something new, so the interpreter is also learning something new, let's work together, rather than thinking “I know everything, and you have no idea how to sign the words that I need you to sign". It's about a collaborative experience and also gaining that emotional support, because we're learning at the same time. And it's really important to have an open dialogue with interpreters because they are within that environment, and they are you in that environment, they are interpreting as you and I think in terms of how we navigate the social environment, how we talk to our academic colleagues in a social environment once the interpreters have gone home, you know, 5:00 pm has arrived and they're not there. So, if I see somebody in the corridor or in the lift or by the kettle and we are only able to just look at one another, because there is no one present to facilitate communication, so what do we do? Do we say hello the weather's dreadful today... how do we start those dialogues and how does that dialogue become "oh did you know that this particular person is leaving?" or "have you heard that this funding is available?" how do you start those conversations when the interpreters come to the end of the day and is not there. So, I'd be interested to learn from the rest of you on that one.

Jemina: I can see the other panellists nodding away and recognizing a lot of what you're saying, it looks familiar to them, so I think that a lot of research does show that networking is an incredibly important part in any workplace. It really is who you know, not what you know sometimes - these side conversations or as they're often called water cooler conversations can be incredibly important to somebody to your career because you find out this incidental information that's actually central information.

# Question 3: do you feel as a deaf researcher you have the same opportunities?

I think that's a perfect example that leads us on to the next question: "do you feel that as deaf researchers you have the same opportunities as your hearing counterparts -- when it comes to networking, applying for promotion, being involved in committees, running courses or programs... are the same expectations made of you? As we know in Academia, people don't often realize as Mette was saying that you've got teaching, marking, assessing, admin and all these other responsibilities, as well as the research you're doing. And all of these aspects are important for career development if you want to climb up the academic career ladder so "do you feel you have the same opportunities as your hearing counterparts and do you have any good stories to share?" And I think with this question I'm going to go to Ixone first.

## Ixone

Ixone: It is. I would say with honesty that no, we don't have the same opportunities. I think there is a glass ceiling -- the same glass ceiling that hearing people have, we have a deaf glass ceiling which is very difficult to break for a number of reasons that I'll talk about briefly, because they've already been mentioned in the panel already. Budgeting again - it always goes back to budgeting, a lack of resources, there's always insufficient resources. Going back to Spain, there is funding for university students once you complete your studies and you begin looking for employment, there is no equivalent of Access to Work in Spain. So how does a deaf person continue and take advantage of those networking opportunities. That is an advantage in the UK - it's not perfect, as Emma has mentioned, what happens when the interpreter has left at 5:00 p.m., but it exists. We don't have anything of that nature in Spain which means that you take on that additional burden. I have seen deaf people gain employment and they're often used within Academia purely to teach sign language and I think well we have a number of different skills, we can talk about a range of topics that we have expertise in, that we are specialists in, but we are made to teach sign language because that's our native language -- and yes, it is, but is that all we can do? Is that our limitation? And also, what else did I want to add? Yes, hearing peers -they are able to access conversations that we can't access. And sometimes they don't share it with us, and they will often bypass us on their career journey because they have access to information that we've missed, you know, whether it's funding for a particular project that we've never been made aware of. Sometimes that can be a problem. I don't see that behaviour everywhere, but there are examples of that behaviour.

Jemina: It's interesting that you talk about this additional burden or extra burden because we talk about deaf gain, and we also talk about deaf tax, don't we? So, this extra effort that deaf people often need to make in working in Academia. Of course we've got our teaching and marking, you've got all the same responsibilities as your hearing counterparts, but then you've got to make sure that interpreters are provided, that they're paid for, so there's this extra level of work -- it sometimes feels like having a whole extra job to juggle on top of your regular responsibilities. I'll go to Mette next.

## Mette

Mette: yeah, I just wanted to talk really about one particular experience when I worked for the other university not at Heriot-Watt, at that time almost everything was online because it was during the covid time. Networking obviously required a bit of extra effort and I had done my PhD at Heriot-Watt, become very used to networking and the social aspect of life there, but in this University there was a project executive, a hearing person, they never introduced me to everybody else, I didn't understand the network of the University, I had no idea of who was who. I realized I worked there for a year; I didn't do any networking. I was only in fact ever communicating with my research project team and that really, you know it was a dead-end job really, from my point of view, there was NO opportunity for progression, there was NO networking going on - I mean really, zero. So, I was very isolated. So, coming back to Heriot-Watt, having this network of deaf academics ready-made here, been familiar to me, really allowed me, you know in terms of getting this job here, to engage with Academia. And when we think about the deaf ecosystem you know I have really benefited from the existence of that at Heriot-Watt. We don't get boxed into just teaching sign language and I think that's obviously very good. For me where deaf network opportunities exist you know and that's your first foot in the door getting this job and then promotion and other opportunities can exist as long as there's that critical mass, if you like. Okay yes, we do train interpreters and have to teach BSL, but you can often use those kinds of activities as a jumping board for what you really want to do as an academic.

Jemina: that's a very interesting point going back to what you and just have said this expectation that deaf will just take sign language but making sure that -- I mean obviously depending on your research background you might have no idea -- I mean if you're a chemist... you know, I mean Emma is a researcher on dementia, not anything to do with languages, Linguistics or sign language, so we obviously should never make an assumption that just because you're deaf you're able to teach sign language but many institutions clearly do that. Let's go to Luigi next.

## Luigi

Luigi: I think some of the others have already made points I don't want to repeat, but one extra thing to add is that the reliance on email and the written word, again English giving us another barrier when it comes to research proposals, ideas, coming together with groups of people, you know bouncing ideas off people... if it's heavily text based... You know, you go away for five minutes, you come back and there's three or four emails, it takes you \*ages\* to catch up and that can be very fatiguing. There's an extra issue there I think is Deaf academics. And we've also talked about not being able to network or have informal conversations with staff on a day-to-day basis without interpreters and I think a lot of universities, when they talk about equality diversity and inclusion, we have that ethos is promoted but that's more about our accessing and our inclusion and we often don't see it in response hearing people coming over to us becoming involved in our world learning Sign Language. I mean everyone can say thank you, that's about the level of it! But there's so much potential and opportunity for hearing people to walk over the bridge in the other direction and I think that that could probably lead to a bit of a disconnect where all the effort, all the work's been done, and all the concern it's on the part of us trying to build bridges over into their world and it would be good to see efforts made the other direction

Jemina: that's a really good example I'd like to come back to that for question number five because I know that through the covid years and deaf people in university were \*very\* clear about Zoom being a much more suitable platform than Teams and being frustrated with what's going on because of Teams being a platform that favoured the audio. We had a widening participation panel for students, and they invited a deaf person to come on the panel, announced it would be on Teams and they said Well I can't actually access the interpreters and stuff through Teams, and they were ejected from the panel! This is a \*widening inclusion\* panel that didn't make the accommodation and the adjustment to allow a deaf academic onto the panel. So, very ironic and very disappointing and it's interesting to see how much accommodation and adaption really happens on top of what people say that they're going to do and the rhetoric, so I think that these issues are constant it's great that they invited a deaf person on to the panel but then they fell down at the very first hurdle by not actually including them. So, it's awareness of these issues and the fact that it's not always a smooth process.

# Question 4: who have been your best allies on your academic journey?

So that leads us on to our next question and Emma, you've mentioned allies already in response to a couple of the earlier questions, about you arriving at the University of Manchester and having a team that you could negotiate and then advocate for yourself, but I'd like to ask all of you as a panel can you talk a little bit more about who you felt have been your best allies on your academic journey? Who has supported you on that journey - don't have to give any names, it's more about what they did, what role they had in supporting you. So why don't we go to Mette first.

## Mette

Mette: Yeah well, I've got a lot of allies which is very positive and a great relief to be able to say and I think it's very context dependent, isn't it? And depending on which barrier. So you know for interpreting services barriers, I could talk to my deaf colleagues about how they've resolved these issues and get tips about how to make arguments and how to respond and advocate for yourself, which I think was really important, because you don't often know how to do that, you're not prepared. So having deaf academic allies in that way. The interpreting team were very good at telling me how to respond to those issues as well. Coming back here to work at Heriot-Watt, my boss decided that we all needed a mentor. This wasn't deaf specific, so I actually have a deaf mentor, and we had our first meeting recently and there were many things I didn't even realize that were important in terms of academic progression and promotion. I'd always thought that, you know, you get your teaching, and you get feedback, the number of Publications is important for promotions, but my mentor said actually you also need to give consideration to your wider role within the academic structures of the university, so don't just stay within the BSL team you need to broaden your horizons, take on administrative roles within the university, within the department. And I hadn't thought of that I was very team focused very inward-looking and I hadn't realized I needed to be more outward-looking. I think that that clarity from my mentor was incredibly instructive and helpful. I mean this is kind of institutional knowledge - these are norms that are very occluded, they're very difficult to understand when you come from my background, and we're already doing a lot of work, we've got all this extra labour to do, as we've already talked about, but then you think about these other roles, there are implications there too for interpreters and for other aspects of that, but having a mentor at least prepared me.

Jemina: okay Mette, I think that's interesting that mentoring, what you said about mentoring is important - I mean, it's important for everybody really in life generally, but when we talk about deaf academics negotiating institutional knowledge, there not being somewhere you can go to find out where things are done. There's no One-Stop shop for information about how to negotiate or navigate. So, it becomes more important I think for deaf academics that you're missing some side conversations, as we mentioned earlier in response to another question, so you need somebody to highlight and to flag for you. I mean ideally it would be a mentor that can sign directly with you without having to go through an interpreter. Positives and negatives there perhaps. Emma you're nodding along, so why don't we go to you next.

## Emma

Emma: I absolutely agree. I think that the learning in an academic world demands that you expose yourself much more. You can focus within your silo, within your area, and feel safe in your work, but no you have to expose yourself more widely because people want to see what you're achieving outside of your own research. So, in my previous role, I was in the EDI committee at the University. So that was overseeing EDI initiatives. At that time, I realized I am a deaf person within a hearing committee, so I had to educate about the pros of Teams against Zoom, and I didn't communicate well in those EDI meetings. I felt "I can't access these meetings… hello!" There would be huge embarrassment, and I think they would be thinking why are they choosing that particular technology when an obvious change could be made. The reason we have to expose ourselves. We have to be seen in terms of our positioning what our passions are, what we want to see change within the university - both internally and externally in our liaison with the community. What's happening outside. And sometimes when you are in your research, you can be quite inward looking, and you don't see out. We shouldn't be deciding the topics that we want to research, we should be looking out into the community, hearing deaf people, those with dementia... If we remain inward-looking then they don't know who we are, and they can't tell us what they want. So, it should be an open communication and a two-way communication. And it's how we as deaf academics have to work. We've talked about it, this additional burden that we carry - to make sure that \*we\* are accessible. It's not about the world being accessible to us but it's also about making ourselves accessible, so that people can tell us what they want us to be looking at and researching in the future.

Jemina: that's an interesting point so you got allies not only in the University but outwith the university. So, if your research is making an impact. And this is a really good example (this is the same for hearing researchers) need to have those relationships and build that rapport, but of course for us when we're looking at our own deaf community, their barriers that they experience in society, we feel perhaps an extra responsibility to ensure that we are improving their lives out in society. Okay that's very fascinating so Luigi.

## Luigi

Luigi: I think there's two different areas when I think about allies. I think about people that aren't deaf, that don't sign but are working on a project with you, and then there are people from the community and of course that can be enormously helpful for talking about all the issues that you experience and helping you with networking and obviously that's a quicker easier way to do that with sign language using people- you can have a meeting of minds, you can explain your project very quickly and get feedback and that's a very positive experience and obviously if you're dealing with another deaf person we understand each other's lived experiences so those are really useful. Obviously when you go to conferences, international events to network with other international deaf scholars, that's particularly special. And in my area of research, you know, it's terrific in terms of building your own knowledge through these networks of what they can confer. So, I think that actually other deaf academics have been my strongest allies.

Jemina: okay so we're getting different perspectives here. I mean deaf academics, not only in your own university, but around the UK and around the globe. And I'm sure that there are many in the audience who would agree with that. I mean, is it every two years or every year that there's the deaf academics conference? That's every two years, so we have a deaf academics international conference it's only for people who are either PhD researchers or are post PhD working in Academia, to come together on a global stage to present, to share their experiences, to talk about how they navigate at working as a deaf academic. And it's wonderful that we have this International Network that's now established and gives opportunities for deaf academics to go and mix and mingle with one another, get their fill before they come back to their home. Ixone.

## Ixone

Ixone: I think within deaf Academia, with the events that I've attended, I think prior to covid perhaps, 2018, 2019, maybe before, it felt that-- not necessarily academic, but it was about being with deaf peers who are experiencing the same things as me. So, there was a sense of shared identity because, you know, the networks I was in within a university and how we were navigating a university was very different. It was about thought-provoking research ideas coming from like-minded peers and they weren't necessarily colleagues, but they did, they gave me my fill and inspiration to continue my research. As a student, my supervisors -- of which I have two, one is hearing who can use sign language - so I don't have any communication barriers with them, I don't need to have interpreters, so that's a lovely experience and I also have a deaf supervisor. That's particularly lovely because they can offer a different perspective and then I would ask my hearing supervisor and they will have a perspective that agrees with mine, so it's almost like a validation, that we are in the same Community as such in terms of lived experience. So that collaboration is extremely useful. We've mentioned already our interpreters as being our allies. Previously as a female, I was studying data science, an MSc, my course was full of men and my interpreters were male. Obviously, they alternated, sometimes I would have a female interpreter, and I felt that there was a slight barrier when I had female interpreters. The university was multicultural - there were different ethnicities, different cultures and often communication could be tricky. So having a female who is also deaf, seemed to be tricky until I had \*male\* interpreters because they helped to almost mask my gender, hearing a male voice seemed to hold some kind of power. So that made it much easier for me to communicate. So, thanks to them for that.

Jemina: that's fascinating, isn't it! Adds a whole other layer to the gendered experience, doesn't it? And I can see that there are a couple of questions that link to people's backgrounds, whether they're a person of colour, and we'll come back to those points in the general Q&A.

# Question 5: do you feel that EDI policies and practices meet deaf academics’ needs?

Jemina: So, the last question is the one we've arrived at, and we'll soon open it up to more questions and discussion, but the last question that we have formally... (let me just remind myself of it...) I think it was, I think it was Emma that was talking about ... working at university (or Luigi) saying EDI you know feeling that we were always having to fit into their agenda rather than the other way around, so do you feel that EDI policies and practices do recognize --as well as recognizing diversity-- is it \*enough\* for us – for you as deaf academics? Does it meet your needs, does it fit with what's going on, or is there some biases in there towards perhaps race and gender, as priorities you know our disabilities and our deaf academics in particular considered within all of this? And let's go to Emma first.

## Emma

Emma: yes, I think for EDI... it's a Hot Topic at the moment, everyone is talking about EDI, we have to make sure that we are respecting protected characteristics. I think the people who are running EDI aren't reflecting diversity - whether that's decision makers or whether they're members of a committee. So, if you're looking at an academic setting, how those conversations reflect in practice is tricky. So, we have a lot of Vlogs or video heads talking about what they will do, but they caption them, as the preferred way of providing access. And if you question that and say "well it would be better if it was interpreted, that is my language" they talk about expense, and it's easier to do captions. And they talk about how YouTube is so fantastic because there are \*automatic\* captions. Well, it isn't! Because we have to double process when we're reading the English. So today for example this wonderful EDI discussion, we have been describing "death" people - D E A T H in the captioning. *(except EDICa admin have corrected the recording).* So those simple errors that we experience all the time, that hearing people don't realize that those captions are not always accurate, the spellings are not always correct. So, I think practically for EDI, the people who pay for it or plan for it, they're looking for quick fixes - a quick way of ticking the Box. "Great, we've done it! We've achieved it!" but that doesn't always work. I've been in EDI meetings where pronouns have been discussed. So how a person prefers to be described whether it's she or her he they them... and within an EDI meeting, one person said that they wanted to be referred to as they but the person leading the meeting repeatedly referred to them as she, so they ignored their request and their preferred pronoun. So, it means that there needs to be more work on how the talk is translated practically and that people are validated - that they feel they are part of an EDI process. There's also the notion of intersectionality. There are a number of different signs - I've spelled it for ease on this occasion. That's a challenge because intersectionality talks about oppression and deaf academics have multiple identities. How each of us identify ourselves, how those different identities are supported, how much those identities are suppressed- or oppressed- on a daily basis and that is our lived experience. How much of it is that oppression within an academic environment where we are strong enough to fight back. How do we do that? We have to be assertive more than the regular deaf person because we are facing so many barriers and oppressive behaviours within an academic setting.

Jemina: it's interesting what you're saying about EDI because I think that a lot of people would say the same, you know, that it's a hot topic, that it's something that's seen as a must-do, but there is a risk of it becoming a tick box exercise, where you set up a committee you make some plans that have certain aspects to the plan. But what's impactful? Is it making a difference? Who's making these decisions? And it does often come back to money, because if you provide expensive solutions then you start to see reluctance as to whether people really want inclusion or not. Mette why don't you go next?

## Mette

Mette: I think that the EDI principles and practices about inclusion, I think Luigi was often saying that we're the ones doing the work, we're the ones that are crossing the bridge over to that side, and we don't often see efforts coming in the other direction, and one thing I think that really struck me is the importance of deaf space. But it being problematic in terms of finding funding to support the establishment of deaf spaces. So as deaf people we're going through extra expense and extra effort without seeing support or funding coming from the mainstream to us. And I think that EDI is very important and I think that you know deaf space, we're going to celebrate true diversity, this is an important thing that needs to be considered, we need to look at different and varied funding streams within the EDI world, because I mean project funding we've seen a great deal of, but we often see hearing people getting funded who have little or no knowledge of deafness or disability, but they know funding processes, they are able to get applications together, they've got the written English skills. But they're not really understanding the lived experiences. And when we think of "crip theory" and "crip time" as part of crip theory - as disabled people, as deaf people, because of language barriers we \*do\* need extra time to prepare project designs, to take into account diversity deaf people's needs. You know and in application processes we don't see those EDI principles really working in order to really increase the number of deaf academics. If you, in terms of EDI policies that it is important, I think, that deaf is explicitly mentioned as diversity, and that we look at diversifying the funding streams \*within\* the EDI sphere.

Jemina: great I think that's a point well made about deaf spaces and also, as well, signing spaces, really we can be calling them because Heriot-Watt as an example we have a team that can expand out to about 25 people, a mixture of deaf and hearing academics and we have our research seminars, we've invited speakers, and we get together to talk about that in a signing space, because for deaf academics and PhD students, as you said, you're always going to seminars, going out into the world with interpreters, participating in being included via interpreters via captions, and it is important to see things the other way around it's very rare. And we're lucky to have an example today where we have a signing space. I mean I'm hearing, but the four of you are deaf we've created a signing space with interpreters who are giving access to the hearing people. So, it's turning that on its head and that's very important that hearing colleagues understand that. At Heriot-Watt, there are many situations where we do have hearing people attend and deaf people are in the majority, and it's very impactful on them to be in this strongly signing environment. You can see the difference it makes to their attitude - it's interesting to see what changes can be affected and influenced. Why don't we go to Ixone next.

## Ixone

Ixone: I'd like to talk about the signing space. It's not always just because we are deaf, you know, we know that hearing people can be part of that because they have skills in sign language which I really like. In terms of EDI policies, I know we must have a policy, but it's about how effectual they are. Sometimes these policies exist but they're not particularly effective for us. So, it's about them being reviewed. Yes, you have a policy... but it feels like a bounced email often. Because that's the reference - "we have a policy". Okay you have a policy, but there's no real reflection as to whether that works, whether it incorporates what people need. No deaf person is the same. We come from different cultures, we have different upbringings, race, gender, identities. Sometimes there is a focus on one particular tick box, a particular type of "that's a deaf person". And why should we be a case to be ticked? I remember when I was approaching the DSA to apply for funding and I had to go in for an assessment - which has never happened in Spain, so it's a bit of a shock when I was doing my course in Spain. So, I thought, okay I'll go along, I will be assessed, and the woman said "Can you hear? Do you use hearing aids?" "No no no no no no." "Okay you signed BSL um okay". And there's all this manipulation on what kind of support I should be receiving. The kind of support I should be receiving should be \*my\* choice and my decision, not somebody's assessment of my needs, and they're making a decision on my behalf. Some of the things that were provided I never asked for, but it was insisted that they were things that I needed. So, some of those policies can be oppressive in themselves. You know they're inherently oppressive in terms of how I can challenge, how I can argue back and sometimes you feel trapped because there is no process. So, EDI policies can be effective if they're well-structured and they are reflected upon, but in turn, the policy can be in itself a barrier and be oppressive. "We've ticked all the boxes. Why are you asking for all these other things? You're asking for too much!" "Well, I'm asking for them because it's my right to ask for them." You know everything is based on the basic, anything more complicated... it's like the policy that says you can only apply for DSA if you've lived in the UK for three years. That's the policy. So, there's no considerations of other characteristics. I am an immigrant, you know, I'm not from a racial minority but I'm Spanish so does the policy consider me and my various identities?

Jemina: Yet another interesting point, but lastly, we'll go to Luigi for this question.

## Luigi

Luigi: I think that the establishment of EDI policy and practice is because of all the problems that people have been experiencing within these systems. So, it was a necessary evil, if the problems didn't exist, we wouldn't see the effort being made. But one of the issues is that these are larger societal issues where people in general don't know how to live with disabled people and to include deaf and disabled people properly. So, we're given piecemeal services, fixes, adjustments, add-ons, as solutions to major structural issues and as long as that's ongoing we're constantly doing the work of having to fit in to \*their\* jigsaw, not the other way around. And I think when we think about technology (and not only just the university experience) but when we think of anything in terms of AI - I mean even speech recognition like Alexa - those sorts of things go on without any consideration of how marginalized groups such as deaf people are going to make use of this. I understand that a lot of these decisions are economic but of course the more you exclude groups, the less efficient and the less societies work. We're the ones having to do all the extra work in order to fit into that picture. And I think that in terms of communication and about how things are done, they never come to us as the experts with the lived experience to feed in so that the message is right from the start - so that we can \*really\* include everybody that's in our society. EDI is still problematic in itself because a lot of the time the people that are involved, the people who set it up and a lack of consultation or meaningful involvement of people who are from the groups that are affected by EDI issues.

Jemina: that's interesting too, isn't it? Luigi you're right if society was inclusive, we wouldn't need all these policies and all this effort. And when people do set up those policies and their practices to ensure appropriate representation. I mean it's very difficult you're always missing somebody from one background. It's very difficult to cover all bases - it is a complicated picture and it is difficult, I think you're right In the ideal world we shouldn't need to fund projects like this Caucus, we should just be able to take for granted an inclusive world but that world feels quite a long way away at the moment doesn't it? Sorry did you want to add something Ixone.

Ixone: yes, if I could the EDI policy should consider what I give for the future. It shouldn't be about what my contribution is, it's more about what the expense is. It's about what I contribute and what they get back from my contribution. They shouldn't always think of things in a monetary way. They should think about this individual, the contribution they will make in their potential future research - they don't think in that way. And I think it's important to think of what individuals will bring and how they will benefit.

Jemina: indeed. I thought I saw one piece of research saying that if you support more deaf people into the workplace then their contribution to the economy of course, they're working, and of course you do need to fund accommodations, interpreters, through Access to Work, but they're paying tax! They're contributing to society; they're being an active participant in society. And we've got to think of Academia in this way and how we have deaf researchers and the contribution that they're going to make from their own unique lived experiences. And not only in research in deaf communities, but becoming involved in a curriculum development, going on different committees, you know, all the other aspects of academic life. So, thank you very much for your responses, all four of you, to those five questions. I've got a whole list of supplementary questions that I would love to follow up with but I'm going to open up to the audience.

# Q&A

We've had a few questions already written down. Kevin Buckle has provided us with quite a few questions, I think there's four from him, so I'll try and - well I'm going to put those into sign language, and I think we can link his questions all together for a response. Kevin -what's your sign name? There it is, “Kevin”, that's what it looks like.

## Do black deaf academics have the same opportunity as white deaf academics?

So, Kevin has raised - and we've talked a little bit about this - he's raised some intersectional issues about whether - he's posing the question whether black deaf academics have the same opportunity as white deaf academics? Do they experience more barriers? And linked to that working with interpreters, similarly, as we know, I think 80% of interpreters are women, and also the vast majority are white, so there are less representative interpreters. So, there's a gap there and how do we feel about closing that gap and what could be done to close that gap? So, I think those two questions really go together. Would anybody in the panel like to respond to those? Emma!

Emma: I completely agree. I think that deaf people of minority communities who are even within further minority committees, they're not present in Academia. You will see one or two. And that occurs in the research process as well. So, for me I do a lot of qualitative work. So that involves me meeting many people. And representatives from those communities that I've mentioned are far and few between. I know why, you know, I'm white, I'm a woman. I'm not a member of their community. So, they will think "why on Earth do I want to be interviewed by this person?" because their deaf stories are missing from our research. How we break those barriers, how we reduce that gap, is communication. It's about getting out there and approaching them. I went to the Student Union conference last year deaf Student Union conference, I talked about my experience, my research journey. There were a number of people there who I said you should really be part of Academia but if I don't know people that want to be beginning an academic journey then I will never know it's about the structural barriers that are in place. Of course, I will support you and be with you on your journey, but if I don't know about you then I can't help. So, I think it's about making that communication much more open and much more successful.

Jemina: I think also and we're talking about sharing of experiences you know and being open and about doing that and recognizing that sometimes it's not easy. You know these are very hard journeys to navigate but having allies, having peers, that can support you, it you know opens many doors. Does anybody else want to come and respond to what Kevin said?

Ixone: Kevin talks about interpreters of colour being few in number; they are a minority in themselves. We do have the Interpreters of Colour Network which hopefully will increase the numbers, but as regards interpreters, it's a personal decision. So, for me I would probably - if I spoke - have a strong Spanish accent (obviously I don't use my voice). In terms of insisting that as a woman do I want somebody that reflects me I'm not so bothered about that. I'm more concerned about the fact that they are reflecting me accurately. But a person of colour feels different because of shared experience and shared culture but it is individual choice. It's about what your particular values are and does your interpreter share those values, and yes, the numbers of interpreters of colour, there are few and it's a fact. Hopefully those numbers will increase in the future.

Mette: Can I come in?

Jemina: yes, please Mette, go.

Mette: I think role modelling is very important here, you know. I mean, look at this panel, we're all white. So, Heriot-Watt teaching staff, the highest percentage is white. So I think this is a really important issue when we're considering the diversity within the deaf academic world; we really need to look at targeting recruitment of people from different backgrounds, and obviously the stipulation of having completed a PhD is, in itself, a barrier in terms of it being a class thing, in terms of your educational background, and of course people of colour have experienced extra barriers in this regard, it's easier for universities to recruit from the elite deaf sphere, if you like, and this is a structural thing where you know if people are perhaps 10 years away from doing their PHD and we still need to welcome them into Academia in order to capacity-build.

Jemina: Emma!

Emma: at my previous University at the time there was discussion as to how you can bring in a deaf person who hadn't done a master's course as yet and include them within a PhD program and there were lots of conversations, that we wanted to have people who had lived experience of that topic or active experience of that particular field of work and how we could incorporate that life learning and enable them to be part of a PhD program. That's the university structure. If somebody wants to progress to a PhD, then it's about what they bring to that experience and if it's purely qualifications ... our journey is not the same as a hearing academic's journey and it's about recognizing what we bring alternative to qualifications.

Jemina: yeah, it's interesting because I think a lot of people feel anxiety. I mean Mette was talking about role models or the lack thereof, and for interest, the EDICa project will soon be advertising a research internship position aimed specifically at people who are from a minoritized group within our society and that would of course include deaf people, people of colour, from ethnic communities, so we are welcoming and giving the opportunity for somebody to dip their toes into the world of research and to encourage them to do so and that advert will be coming out I think in the next couple of months, so I'll make sure that we get that message out and hopefully a deaf person will apply. Mette.

Mette: just to add to that, when I worked at this different University, the PI was a hearing black woman and what really struck me is how strongly networked she was in the black community and you can see this as a hearing black person she had the agency and the ability to do that, and I hadn't even- at Heriot-Watt it had never even occurred to me, we have to give due credence to the importance of networks and how much he leveraged off her network and as deaf academics we ought to be doing the same thing - inside and outside of our own community. I mean we can't wait to be approached; we've got to be proactive in approaching people who are from a wider landscape than our own.

## Do you feel that your lived experience as deaf people has been appropriated by hearing people?

Jemina: okay thanks for that I'm just going to try and- Kevin's got quite a few questions but I might come back to his if we've got time and go with somebody else that we haven't yet answered. "Do you feel that your lived experience as deaf people has been appropriated by hearing people who don't really acknowledge the work that goes on and they don't really include deaf people?" Have we had that experience, where hearing people have, I suppose, exploited our experiences for their own career advancement?

Mette: Definitely! Definitely! I think it's quite -- I think that's a normal part of our experience. I think there are many hearing academics that have been researching in the deaf and the sign language world, published, become very successful, often not with deaf authors, but things have been changing recently. I think of more recent years there's awareness of the need to co-create with deaf academics, but there are some areas of life where we're still not seeing very much progress. Obviously deaf studies you would expect there to be progress, but interpreting studies, in linguistics, we still see some of those issues existing where we need more deaf people in those fields.

Ixone: I agree absolutely. For example, my dad who is a sign language teacher - in Spanish sign language of course - students are always wanting to film him and he wants to do more research but they say to him "oh but you don't have the linguistic background, you don't have the qualifications that we require" because my dad's education was compromised so they're happy to film him and use his clips and publish with his assistance but that came from him, their work is not acknowledging his lived experience, and it's just taken from him to utilize for their own benefit. And it's the hearing researchers who benefit of course and their career improves accordingly. My father isn't the only person you know that -- no one knows who those people are, those hidden people that can offer so much, that in-depth knowledge, that rich level of knowledge, where hearing people say "oh no no no - I've got the degree, I know better, you just give me what you have and I'll use it" You know and we would like to think that that was happening a long time ago but unfortunately it still happens now.

Emma: I think like Mette says, I think things are changing. I think if we look back 30 years then yes, this would be a regular occurrence that a hearing academic would bring in a deaf person purely as a research assistant because they can do the signing and once they have completed their worth, then they get rid of them and they're not involved in the writing, the publication, absolutely. I think things have evolved. I think changes have been made. It depends on the hearing person, their academic background, their passion, their heart, their motivation, their motivation for working with deaf people. I think a lot of hearing academics within deaf studies or within Linguistics or social studies, their passion is about improving the future for deaf people. So that's the heart, that's the collaborative working. And you see a lot of hearing academics promoting their deaf colleagues and saying, "off you go". We all have our own unique journeys and it's about those allies and how they assess us as people and if you know you're going to work with a hearing person, check their record, check what they've done previously, check what they've publicized, check how much they have truly collaborated with deaf people, look at their Facebook page, do they have true deaf friends? Do that measurement yourself and if you feel comfortable working with that hearing person then fine. If you don't, then don't. Say no and move on to a different project.

Jemina: thanks Emma that's a really good tip. Ixone?

Ixone: Check Facebook and then Cheerio. Yes, I just wanted to mention it depends where you're from, in the UK things, are absolutely better so much better, because you have so many deaf academics. You know I look at Heriot-Watt with envy, there are so many. So, the UK is better. But if you look at other countries, the situation is not necessarily as good as it is here. Not yet, well, yes.

Jemina: fingers crossed, not yet indeed. Mette, and then we'll go on to another question.

Mette: just to link into what we've been talking about, when we think about deaf studies, we have seen, you know, deaf studies really being sidelined, and linguistic studies and interpreting studies being promoted and given a status that deaf studies doesn't seem to have. There's a lot of knowledge experience perspectives, a lot of learnings that need to be encouraged, and we need to see an uplift of the \*status\* of deaf studies. It doesn't really -- it always sits underneath interpreting studies, this is a very UK thing, or within interpreting training courses, and we need to see a promotion of death studies as an equal discipline.

Luigi: Just - as Metta was just saying I mean, if you think back to Paddy Ladd's book and everything that's flowed from that, about deafhood and you know expanding the deaf agency in different spheres, and you know in terms of deaf studies, you cannot separate out the lived experience and the cultural knowledge of deaf people and you know it's not only just the language and people who use the language, we've got to consider all these cultural aspects that are given less importance - or have done traditionally - in teaching and learning. And I think back to 20 years ago, I mean Paddy wrote this book 20 years ago, was published in fact over 20 years ago, and we haven't seen a great ground shift since then.

## Interpreters feeling comfortable to work in academia

Jemina: okay so look, we've got a comment here from an interpreter Jenny, saying she's interpreted for 15 years and she's admitting to feeling a little bit guilty about not accepting work in the academic sphere because she's not comfortable. So, I mean it makes quite an impact on us isn't it, that people don't want to work in this environment, they're very encouraging, and they want to come along to a seminar like this and watch what's going on. Hopefully you're thinking about collaboratively interpreting and working with these lovely deaf academics that's what we would say!

Luigi: Let's hook them in!

## How can funding processes be made accessible for deaf researchers?

Jemina: and I think, interestingly, in the EDI Caucus, one of our work streams is about trying to reduce bias in funding processes so there's a question here in terms of how internal reviews, external reviews are given, and there's some research and this is a report that's actually been published looking at what research has been done, and you know double-blind reviews, lots of different strategies, how can we offset the disadvantages that people experience in these processes? And one of the questions here is to that point. Do we think that funding processes - how can they be made more accessible for deaf researchers? Anybody with any ideas, if you're going to apply for funding, what would be helpful to you? What do you need that's different?

Emma: often funders will organize a webinar which are conducted in spoken language, in audio, recorded in that format, with no transcript, no English transcript, and where is the interpreters? So, the funders themselves, those funding bodies, need to think about their own EDI practice - how they make themselves more accessible for us to then approach to ask questions. I think often again, we have the onus of the ones who have to make that approach, the ones that bring the interpreters and explain this is how I, as a deaf person, has to do this. I know that at Gallaudet University, they established a signing journal through their death studies team, and that's been in existence for a long time and, you think, "where is the BSL version of the journals? Where are our journals? Where are the sign language journals?" I'd like to see that happen. I remember when I submitted my PhD thesis and I was thinking, why am I having to do this in English? Why could I have not done this in BSL, you know? I can argue my story in a better way in BSL. You know I had a DVD in my thesis because I wanted my language there. I don't know if the examiner watched the DVD, but I was trying to make a point that this could have been in a DVD format. (Just to let the young people out there know, it was an old-fashioned thing that we used to record after the videotape) So that the academic way -- the theory and the background is forced on us to do it in this written form.

Jemina: That's a really good point, does anybody else want to come in on that? no?

Luigi: Sorry I actually have to go! I'm really sorry! We're at that time where I have to vacate the room, so I do apologize, I have to go right now.

## Should Britain have an institution akin to Gallaudet University for deaf students?

Jemina: that's no problem we're going to finish in two minutes anyway, Luigi, thank you for your involvement, coming along for the panel. Okay so why don't we just look at one last question. The question is again from Kevin - do we think that in Britain we should have a Gallaudet style University- and for people that don't know, in America, there is an institution Gallaudet University it's unique in the world in that it is a university in Washington DC and it is for deaf students. So the vast majority of the academics and students apart from interpreting students and lecturers are deaf and they are across a whole range of different disciplines so this is like one central University where deaf will know that they can go from around the whole of the United States then go back home to their home state. Do we think that we should have a deaf university here in the UK? is the question that Kevin has posed us.

Ixone: That's interesting question! Because I am from Spain and I feel a little bit irritated by the fact that I'm having to access academia via the English language and I think what about other languages, so some people ask why have you done your PhD in Spanish? You live in the UK, and yes I do but my research is based in Spain, I want to be in Spain, because I want people to access my research in Spanish, and I think about English in the UK, that's the global language of course, but you know we all have different languages, and we are forced to learn another language in order to access the UK academic system. It would be so lovely if there was this University where myself and my peers were all the same, it would be lovely of course, but you know, America is a very different environment. It's a huge country, there are international students that choose to go there, but Europe is a very different climate and to all come to one UK University feels a little odd. The importance of knowing English for your academic experience, for your academic future and progression, it would be about accommodating other languages in order to flourish. If we're basing everything on English, are we then excluding research in other languages? And people say there's no research in Spanish, and you think Well there is! There's lots, it's just that we focus on America, we focus on the UK, on Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, because we they all speak the same language. It's easier. What about the other languages? What about us? We get left behind. I'm having to follow methodologies that don't necessarily apply to me and my way of living, so there's always that disconnect it's just an interesting question.

Jemina: I just realized that we're already over time! It's past half past 4 here in the UK, so we are going to have to bring this to a close, with the full knowledge that Fenella, who's been helping us here, she wants to promote the next seminar, so I think Fenella you have one slide to show us, don't you? a slide or are you going to put something in the chat? Okay well tell me what to say. I'll wait for her response, while I'm doing that a really big thank you to Mette, to Emma, to Ixone, and the now absent Luigi, for your time your thoughtful responses, it's been a terrific, interesting discussion. There are a couple of questions and comments that we haven't got time to get to because we've run out of time, but I think it's been incredibly valuable. We have recorded this; it will be going on the EDICa website. Everybody who's here will be getting notification of that and this is a slide about our next seminar which is to do with neurodiversity and menopause at work, so we'll be looking at different experiences of people from both of those groups, if you're interested as you can see, please do come, it's on the 15th of October, please do register for that event. Thank you. Thank you very much everybody for your time, your questions your comments, and your attendance have a good evening.