Hello,

**Paragraph 1**

My name is XXX. I am a Community Liaison Officer and Support Worker for the Deaf Community XXX and am based in XXXX. I saw your flyer about the forum on Access to Justice System for people with a Disability. I am unable to attend the forum but have some information to give you on behalf of Deaf people here in XXXX.

**Paragraph 2**

I have had some reports from a number of Deaf clients regarding problems accessing Police services. There seems to be a misguided assumption that Deaf people can all just lip-read. When Deaf people go to a Police station to either report an incident or seek information, Police Officers have refused the request to “please get an interpreter”. It has actually been stated by officers XXXX Police Station (in the XXXX) that they only provide Auslan Interpreters for Deaf people if they are being interviewed about an offence.

**Paragraph 3**

Another incident was when 2 police officers attended a Deaf couple’s house and the police expected the deaf parent’s child to interpret for them. It is very inappropriate to use family members as interpreters, even more so to use children, who should not be exposed to adult situations and conversations such as Police matters. A refusal was again the response to the request to “please get an interpreter.”

**Paragraph 4**

Another incident was where a Deaf person was in a police interview and it was dealt with by writing on paper.  The Deaf person’s first language is Auslan and English is their second language, which can so easily lead to all sorts of misunderstandings.  At a later date the Deaf person’s mother interpreted without any qualifications except the ability to communicate with her son. Compound that inappropriateness with the specific language and meaning of a legal situation, which would not be readily available to a lay person.

**Paragraph 5**

Lawyers and magistrates have limited knowledge about Deaf people, Deaf Culture and the dynamics of the Deaf community.  This can greatly influence their fairness of perception, which can have an effect on decisions and judgements.