

To whom it may concern,

I welcome that Ofcom have published a consultation setting out the case for the 999 emergency service phone line to be contactable in BSL.

However I wish to point out that this should NOT replace emergencySMS which can be very useful where a mobile signal strength is too weak to support a video emergency relay call in BSL. For instance, to make a NGT (Text Relay UK) emergency call via Text Relay service from a mobile away from home, you would need at least 3G strength or better which is the minimum requirement for NGT calls at present.

As I am an avid adventurer enjoying remote mountain walks (Scotland or Wales for example) or sailing offshore (6 miles or more from shore), emergencySMS would come into its own as you can send a SMS or engage in a two-way conversation on a faint mobile signal.

I know that access to 999 in BSL is not for everybody but some BSL users who may feel more comfortable in relaying their messages in BSL. This can be a life saver for some people as emergencySMS is to me. I am a BSL user myself but fortunate enough to be able to read and send a message in good written English so therefore I can have the best of both NGT and SMS at present. I do, however, use BSL video calling service to my bank and mobile provider or other service where available.

Regards

Mike Aston