Good practice to assist individuals with hearing loss in meetings

This good practice guide is to help create an inclusive meeting where individuals may have a range of hearing loss. Some may use assistive technology such as hearing aids and loops, others may lip-read and some may use signing or a combination of these.

If possible establish with the hearing impaired individual the strategies that are most useful to them.

1. Chair to:
   a. ensure only one person speaks at a time
   b. give regular summary of discussion and clarity re progression of meeting, for example, to indicate when moving on to the next agenda item
   c. remind participants of the good practice points in 2. below if necessary

2. All participants to:
   a. indicate they are about to speak by raising their hand
   b. speak clearly with good volume and more slowly than normal (to aid lip-readers)
   c. look up when speaking
   d. ensure their faces are not obscured by their hands/papers
   e. try not to block the view of others
   f. indicate to the Chair when they have missed any parts of the discussion or require a brief summary

3. Committee Secretaries and meeting administrators to:
   a. carefully plan the seating in the room. There should be an unobstructed line of vision to all meeting participants as far as possible. This will also aid anyone who is lip reading
   b. schedule a short break (10 minutes) if the meeting is longer than an hour

To reduce background interference and noise, mobile phones should be turned off if possible, projectors and/or PCs only activated for presentations, paper-rustling/rustling food wrappers and pen-clicking, finger tapping etc. to be kept to a minimum.

If papers are tabled a reasonable period of reading time should be given to ensure those who lip-read do not miss out on any discussion.
It will be helpful to the individual with hearing loss to sit where they can see all participants if possible and where the lighting is best for them to help with lip-reading. This may include sitting opposite the Chair with any windows behind them, having the room layout changed to reduce the distance between themselves and other attendees and request additional lighting if the room is too dark.

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