

# **Balfour wants changes in shops to help people with hearing loss**

**Lothian MSP Jeremy Balfour has shown his support for a campaign that calls on UK retailers to make their stores more accessible for people who are deaf or have hearing loss.**

The Access for All in Retail campaign was created by UK charity, Action on Hearing Loss, to address the issues that the 12 million people across the UK who are deaf or have hearing loss face whilst shopping, particularly during Covid-19.

The charity has penned an open letter to leading retailers encouraging them to minimise the barriers created by face coverings; reduce background noise; use hearing loops; and provide staff with deaf awareness training.

Mr Balfour, who is the convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Disability, has signed the letter and encourages others to do the same. He said: "For people who are deaf or have hearing loss, trips to supermarkets or retail stores can already be a challenging and frustrating experience due to issues such as loud music or a lack of hearing loops.

"Since the pandemic has led to the compulsory use of face masks within shops, the number of challenges that deaf people are facing has grown.

"It is important that retailers make changes and raise awareness amongst their staff so that these barriers are

broken down.

“Therefore, I would encourage everybody to sign the open letter written by Action on Hearing Loss and I am calling upon retailers in Edinburgh to make necessary changes.”