



WHAT WORKS:

HEARING LOSS AND EMPLOYMENT

A guide for employers to
support people with hearing
loss in the workplace



Document Title

What works: hearing loss and employment

A guide for employers to support people with hearing loss in the workplace.

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Promoting equality and addressing health inequalities are at the heart of NHS England's values. Throughout the development of the policies and processes cited in this document, we have:

- Given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not share it; and
- Given regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to, and outcomes from healthcare services and to ensure services are provided in an integrated way where this might reduce health inequalities.

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1 Foreword

By Professor Sue Hill OBE, Chief Scientific Officer for England

Hearing loss continues to be a growing challenge in England with over nine million people affected by it. The scale of the challenge requires concerted effort and action from a wide range of stakeholders across the public, private, professional and voluntary sectors.

Significant progress has been made since the publication of the Action Plan on Hearing Loss in 2015, which brought together a wide range of organisations from all sectors committed to improving services for children and adults with hearing loss.



Following the publication of the Action Plan, I was very pleased to launch the National Commissioning Framework for Hearing Loss services last year, which delivered one of the key recommendations of the Action Plan and provided a practical guide to support commissioners making day to day decisions with patients affected by hearing loss. The framework represented a dedicated partnership with stakeholders and set out a series of recommendations on how services for people living with hearing loss could be improved.

I am delighted that the true partnership and ongoing commitment by our stakeholder organisations within the hearing loss community continues and that we have worked together again this year to deliver more of the recommendations in the Action Plan.

A series of “What Works” guides has been produced in partnership by NHS England, the Department of Work and Pensions, the Department for Education and hearing loss charities covering the life course as individuals with hearing loss transition from childhood to adulthood, join the workforce and age healthily. The aim of these three guides is to help create a whole system approach to the delivery of public services. They will help organisations to support individuals with hearing loss, as they navigate the system throughout their life course, so they have a positive experience and can lead successful, fulfilling and independent lives.

This guide is specifically aimed at employers to help them support people with hearing loss so that they can work well and contribute their best in the workplace.

We are very grateful to all those who have given so much of their time to produce this series of guides, in particular Action on Hearing Loss, the Ear Foundation, the National Deaf Children’s Society and the Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance.

2 Introduction

Most of us take our hearing for granted and it is central to our health, well-being, communication, independence and quality of life. Over nine million people in England, approximately one in six, are living with some form of hearing loss; around 4.4 million of working age¹.

The scale of the challenge requires a broad response from the health and care system and beyond. This was acknowledged by NHS England, the Department of Health, other Government Departments and stakeholder organisations within the hearing loss community when the Action Plan on Hearing Loss, a national government strategy for hearing loss, was published in March 2015. It set out the case for action to tackle the rising prevalence and personal, social and economic costs of hearing loss and provided a rallying call to a wide range of stakeholder organisations from all sectors to improve services for children and adults with hearing loss.

As part of the ongoing commitment by public service departments and stakeholder organisations across the voluntary, professional and private sectors to implement the Action Plan on Hearing Loss, three guides have been produced. They are intended to provide information, advice and good practice tips for those working with people who have hearing loss in different settings, with the overall aim of improving their experience and ensuring that they are actively supported and empowered to lead the lives they want for themselves and their families.

This guide has been produced in partnership with NHS England, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and hearing loss charities in response to the ambition set out in the Action Plan on Hearing Loss to improve employment outcomes for young people and adults with hearing loss. It focuses on what employers can do to ensure people with hearing loss can work well and contribute their best in the workplace and provides useful hints on attracting, recruiting and retaining staff with hearing loss.

2.1 How to use this guide

Hearing loss affects those both born deaf and those who acquire it later in life. Throughout the guide we use the term “people with hearing loss” to refer to people with all forms of hearing loss, including people who:

- are born deaf;
- are gradually becoming hearing impaired and may not yet realise they have a problem;
- have hearing loss and use hearing aids or other hearing devices; and
- use sign language.

¹ Action on Hearing Loss 2015 *Hearing Matters*. [pdf]
Available at: <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk> (Accessed 1 April 2017).

Section 3 describes the impact of hearing loss in relation to employment and why it is important for employers to be aware of this.

Employers should be familiar with their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and section 4 summarises what should be considered for employees with hearing loss.

Section 5 provides useful advice and tips for employers to support them in understanding the different needs of people with hearing loss and attracting, recruiting, managing and retaining staff in the workplace, including examples from case studies.

Information and resources and where to go for further help on hearing loss for employers are included in sections 6 and 7 respectively.

Please note that footnotes will only appear once in this document, although they may be referenced on more than one occasion in the text.

3 Impact on employment

There are nine million people in England who have a hearing loss and over four million of those people are of working age¹. This means there are millions of people who are willing and able to work; yet their hearing loss impacts on their employment prospects and can lead to loss of employment and difficulties in finding employment.

People with hearing loss can feel isolated at work, which prevents them from fulfilling their potential – and can even force them to leave employment altogether. This could have an impact on the productivity of a business; employers could lose valuable and skilled employees, and be left with the costs of recruiting and training new members of staff. However, with the right adjustments and employer support, hearing loss does not have to present a barrier in the workplace. By giving employees with hearing loss the support they need, businesses will profit, and people with hearing loss will benefit too.

3.1 The personal impact

For people with hearing loss, there is a significant impact on work, in both applying for jobs and in employment. Research on the experience of people with hearing loss and employment² found that:

- Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents felt that their employment opportunities were limited because of their hearing loss;
- 70% agreed that their hearing loss sometimes prevented them from fulfilling their potential at work;
- Just over two-thirds (68%) agreed that they sometimes felt isolated at work because of their hearing loss;
- Two-fifths (41%) had retired early due to the impact of their hearing loss and struggles with communication at work.

Many people with hearing loss say they prefer not to declare their hearing loss on application forms as they fear not being shortlisted for interview if they do.

The employment rate for those with hearing loss is 65%, compared to 79% of people with no long-term health issue or disability³. This has a serious impact on an individual's own finances as well as the wider economy.



“I never declare my deafness in applications or interviews unless asked straight out. If I declare in applications I never get an interview.”

2 Arrowsmith, L. 2014, Hidden Disadvantage: Why people with hearing loss are still losing out at work. [pdf] Available at: https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Documents/Policy%20research%20and%20influencing/Research/Hidden%20Disadvantage/Hidden_Disadvantage_full_report.ashx (Accessed 2 April 2017).

3 Office of National Statistics, 2015 cited by Action on Hearing Loss.N.D. Hearing Matters p.79 Available at: <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/policy-research-and-influencing/research/hearing-matters.aspx>. (Accessed 7 April 2017)

3.2 The economic impact

On average, people with hearing loss are paid £2,000 less per year than the general population – this amounts to an annual £4 billion in lost income across the UK⁴. Recent estimates suggest that the UK economy loses £25 billion a year in lost productivity and unemployment due to hearing loss as too many people are unable to work⁵. If nothing is done to address lower employment rates for those with hearing loss, by 2031 the UK economy will lose £38.6bn per year in potential economic output.



3.3 The impact of employers' attitudes

Employers attitudes towards hearing loss can be one of the main reasons why people with it struggle to find and remain in employment. Evidence from the research indicates that nearly eight out of ten respondents (79%) report that employer attitudes are the biggest barrier for people with hearing loss in the workplace⁶.

The perspective of employers is largely based on the following:

- a lack of confidence to hire people with hearing loss;
- a perceived lack of information and advice available on employing people with hearing loss; and
- lack of preparation to address the issue of the ageing workforce;

In addition, there are many myths surrounding employing people with hearing loss⁷.

Guidance is available which will help dispel these myths and give employers the confidence to employ people who have hearing loss and to support employees who may be affected. In addition, this guide provides useful advice and tips in section five to support employers in their role.

"It's too expensive to employ a person who is deaf."

"It's a health & safety nightmare."

"It's too difficult to communicate with someone who has hearing loss?"

"People who lose their hearing cannot continue working."

4 Archibold, S. et al, N.D. The Real Cost of Adult Hearing Loss.: reducing its impact by increasing access to the latest hearing technology. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.earfoundation.org.uk/files/download/869> (Accessed 2 April 2017).

5 International Longevity Centre, 2014. Commission on Hearing Loss: Final report. Available at: http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/publications/publication_details/commission_on_hearing_loss_final_report (Accessed 7 April 2017)

6 Arrowsmith, L. 2014, Hidden Disadvantage: Why people with hearing loss are still losing out at work. [pdf]. Available at: https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Documents/Policy%20research%20and%20influencing/Research/Hidden%20Disadvantage/Hidden_Disadvantage_full_report.ashx (Accessed 2 April 2017).

7 Action on Hearing Loss, N.D. Working for Change: Increasing confidence in employing people with hearing loss. A guide for employers. [pdf] Available from: https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Documents/Campaigns/Workingforchange/A1325_WorkingforChange_MythBustingGuide_A4_v11_DIGITAL.ashx (Accessed 2 April 2017).

4 Employers' responsibilities

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for disabled employees and prospective employees, including people with hearing loss as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- Adjusting the layout of a meeting room and using good lighting to help the person with hearing loss see everybody clearly - this is important for lipreading.
- Modifying a job to take the needs of a person with hearing loss into account.
- Moving a person with hearing loss to an office with good acoustics - where sound is transmitted well.
- Providing communication support for meetings, such as speech-to-text reporters.
- Installing equipment for employees with hearing loss, such as amplified telephones and flashing-light fire alarms.
- Providing a portable hearing loop, or other listening device, for employees with hearing loss to use during a training course away from the office.
- Giving employees time off work for their audiology appointments.



5 What works – tips for employers

It can be daunting to recruit a person with hearing loss if you have never done so before. There may be concerns about communication, the support the person might need, or health and safety in the workplace. This section provides some useful tips and advice employers can consider in employing people with hearing loss.

5.1 Understanding the different needs of people with hearing loss

It is important to understand that hearing loss covers a broad range of people whose needs can vary widely, as this may depend on the type or level of hearing loss. A person who is profoundly deaf could use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate and will need different support from a person who uses hearing aids and verbal communication. They, again, will have different needs from a person with mild hearing loss who does not need to use hearing aids.

The environment will also have an impact on a person's needs in the workplace. For example, in a busy, open plan office, a person with mild hearing loss might need an amplified telephone, but in a quiet environment, this might not be the case.

Case study: Employee, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust

"I'm always up front and tell people that I'm totally deaf in one ear. It saves a lot of time and stops anyone accusing me of being rude when I don't respond to them. Most people I work with know to stand on my left side or face me when they are talking so I can hear them properly. Being able to have some say in where my desk is within the office is important as I need to be able to hear conversations. The same goes for attending meetings. My colleagues are aware that there are optimum places in a room where I sit so I can see faces and lip read and minimize background noise. I'm also not afraid to ask people to move if there's only one good place in a room where I'll be able to hear and they're in it! It's very isolating when you're in the wrong position and can't hear so things like this make a huge difference to being able to manage in the workplace."

5.2 Attracting staff with hearing loss

People with hearing loss represent a talented and skilled labour resource, but this remains somewhat untapped. To ensure that employers recruit from the largest talent pool and include those who may have hearing loss, employers should:

- Advertise jobs where people with hearing loss will see them or be told about them, for example at Jobcentre Plus.
- Offer alternative ways for people to contact employers for more information, for example, provide an email address as well as a telephone number or an information pack.

- Think about the wording of the advert, and express the importance of matching people with the right skills to the job.
- Think about including an equal opportunities statement in the advert.
- Commit to becoming Disability Confident. This government scheme aims to help employers make the most of opportunities provided by employing people with disabilities. The scheme advises employers on the steps required to attract, recruit and develop people with disabilities.



5.3 Recruiting staff with hearing loss

5.3.1 The application

The application process may need to be adjusted for people with hearing loss. For example, application forms may have to be in an alternative format, such as BSL video. When shortlisting, employers may need to take into account that someone may have BSL as their first language.

A person with hearing loss may not disclose their hearing loss when they apply for a job, and they are not legally obliged to do so. However, it is good practice to ask a person's access needs ahead of an interview. This will ensure that the interview process is fair.

“Do you require any special arrangements to ensure you receive a fair interview, for example a sign language interpreter, lip speaker, speech-to-text operator, audio transcription or wheelchair-accessible interview room?”

Consider using this wording.

5.3.2 The interview

If a shortlisted candidate indicates that they require communication support of any kind at interview, this may be funded through the Access to Work scheme, which is explained in section six. Providing the right kind of communication support as specified by the candidate will ensure that they have a fair interview and that the employer can fully explore their potential.

The following should ensure employers get the best from all candidates:

- Establish whether candidates require communication support and if so what type. Under the Equality Act it is the responsibility of the potential employer to arrange this provision.
- Demand for communication professionals is extremely high, so they need to be booked well in advance.



- Ensure that the communication professional or video interpreting services are booked with enough time to spend around 10 minutes with the candidate and the interview panel. This will allow both the interview panel and the candidate enough time to become familiar with working alongside a communication professional.
- Check with the candidate, or communication professional, that the room is arranged appropriately. For example, if the candidate is a lipreader, they will need to face the interviewer.
- Ensure the room is adequately lit to enable lipreading. The candidate should not be facing a window, as this puts the interviewer's face in shadow.
- If the candidate requires a loop system but this is not available, consider holding the interview in another venue such as Jobcentre Plus, where a loop system is available.
- Do not shout, but speak clearly and naturally.
- Focus on the candidate's abilities, not their hearing loss.

Case study: London Borough of Camden

Asif is profoundly deaf and a BSL user who currently works for the London Borough of Camden. He is fully aware of the Access to Work scheme and shared this information with his employer at the end of the interview for his job. This reassured the employer that he was capable of doing the job advertised and that his deaf needs could be met.

Asif receives communication support from a BSL interpreter which is fully funded by the Access to Work scheme and enables him to access telephone calls and attend meetings at all levels in his role in Adult Social Care, where he assesses and supports people with hearing loss.

Asif explains:

“My clients have varying degrees of hearing loss – the majority of them have hearing loss due to their age or due to accidents or injuries. I go out with my BSL interpreter to carry out assessments of need. The communication is clearly established - I sit opposite and my interpreter sits alongside the person I am assessing, both face me and our conversation is translated from BSL to English and vice versa. The majority of my clients with hearing loss have never met a deaf person before and find me to be inspirational. I am able to empathise with their situation and encourage them to overcome the barriers that result from their hearing loss. I share my own coping strategies and help them to adopt a ‘can do’ attitude, so they can achieve their goals!”

For training or large meetings that last more than two hours, Asif needs two BSL interpreters to work together. This allows each BSL interpreter to take short breaks, without disrupting the session. The second interpreter is also funded by Access to Work or in some cases, by the local authority, as part of the reasonable adjustment in line with the Equality Act. BSL interpreters also support Asif in making telephone calls using the hands free option; this enables the interpreter to sign to Asif using both hands, whilst listening and speaking to person on the phone.

Another part of Asif’s role is to raise deaf awareness among his colleagues and other staff within the department as they are expected to provide good services to residents who may also have hearing loss.

5.4 Managing staff with hearing loss

If a new or existing employee has hearing loss employers may need to make some changes to the physical work environment. Many of the changes involve very little or no cost and can include:



- Locating the staff member with hearing loss where they can see the rest of the room, not with their back to the door. This will reduce isolation and increase awareness and effective communication for everyone.
- Making sure there is good lighting. People with hearing loss rely on visual cues for effective communication.
- Installing a loop system which can greatly assist hearing aid users.
- Providing equipment such as a smartphone so a person with hearing loss can access the Next Generation Text Relay Service.
- Arranging hearing/deaf awareness training for all staff to improve their awareness of optimising their own and others' hearing and communication skills.
- Checking that emergency evacuation instructions are written in plain English, and ensuring that fire officers are aware of any employees with hearing loss. Appropriate evacuation procedures should be made in case of fire. This could include providing staff with hearing loss with a vibrating fire alarm pager and appointing someone as a 'buddy' to alert them when the alarm sounds.

Case study: Wessex Water – inherent disability awareness

The Human Resources manager at Wessex Water, explains the inherent supportive culture at the company: "Wessex Water has always been an open and supportive company with an almost familial culture. The company is growing, and we recognise the challenges in maintaining this; however, we feel confident we will do so because we have management who lead by good example, and guidance available for supporting a more diverse workforce. The Human Resources and Occupational Health teams are well-trained to provide support to line managers, plus a lot of disability information is included on the intranet, which staff can access at any time. We are proud to have a very low turnover - some staff have been working here for 25 years or more. We recognise that our workforce is ageing, and so we need to retain experienced staff as well as attracting new people to the organisation. We encourage managers to have open conversations, to talk about what equipment is available, and to be prepared to make adjustments when required. The Human Resources team is always here for support. We also run regular employment law updates for all senior managers which aim to keep staff up to date on current equality legislation, but also as a reminder of their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

5.4.1 Supporting and retaining existing staff

Many people begin to lose their hearing as they get older, and as the state pension age rises, a higher proportion of the workforce will have hearing loss. As stated previously around 41% people with hearing loss retire early due to the impact of their hearing loss³. The reasons for retiring early include difficulties in fulfilling day-to-day tasks, such as using the phone, or communication challenges with colleagues.

Age-related hearing loss develops slowly over time, and it sometimes takes several years for an individual to realise they are having difficulty hearing – by which time their productivity in the workplace has already been compromised. Because of this, and because age-related hearing loss is so common, it is good practice to build in exploration of hearing-related issues into the standard occupational health process so that support can be routinely provided as soon as it is needed.

When a member of staff who has developed a disability leaves employment, their knowledge, skills and experience is lost. Recruiting and training a replacement can be very expensive and time-consuming. This can be avoided by employers being flexible in approach and making small changes to the working environment.

Some people will be worried about losing their job if they admit that they have hearing loss. Employers should consider the following to encourage retention of skilled and experienced employees who find themselves in this position:

- Have a good system of support in place for all employees; talk to them about how well they are hearing in their work environment. Introduce opportunities for staff members to disclose information about hearing loss during annual reviews or supervision sessions.
- In the case of any change in an employee's hearing, discuss with them whether there are any changes in the workplace that would make it easier for them to hear better.
- Reassure staff that acquiring a hearing loss or other disability will not mean unequal treatment.
- Consider changing the person's work station so that they can see better and have more light.
- Explain your responsibilities as an employer under the Equality Act.
- Make reasonable adjustments to the employee's post so that they can continue to work for your organisation.
- Think about noise levels in the building; an open plan office is good for being able to see but can become noisy. Cubicles or dividing screens could reduce noise but also create visual barriers.



- Think about how to reduce the impact of sources of noise in the environment such as air conditioning units, projectors and background music.
- Raise awareness amongst employees of the Access to Work scheme and encourage them to get in touch and request a work-based assessment. Equipment and special aids can be provided so that employees can continue working in their current role. Explore with your employee whether they feel that their skills would suit a different role at the same level, if there are sources of noise in their current environment that cannot be modified.
- Consider offering Deaf Awareness training to your employees - the cost of this may be covered by the Access to Work scheme.
- Encourage staff to create and follow simple ground rules for team meetings, for example, enforcing good communication practices for everyone such as ensuring only one person speaks at a time.

Employers can also encourage employees to consult their GP. The GP should refer the individual to hearing services, usually referred to as audiology services, for tests. It could be that the person would benefit from hearing aids, which would enable them to continue to fulfil their potential at work, and the audiologist should explain this during the appointment. The audiologist may also be able to suggest other interventions, such as specialist office equipment, or signpost to other sources of support, such as Access to Work, which would ensure a person can carry out their role. In some areas individuals can contact local high street audiologists who can offer advice; some of whom can provide NHS audiology services without the need for a GP referral.

“Remember an employee who has developed hearing loss is still the same person as they were before with the same skills and experience.”

Case study: Western Power Distribution: providing ongoing support to staff who lose their hearing

Western Power Distribution employs a man who has had a hearing loss since he was a child and uses hearing aids but, as he gets older, his hearing is deteriorating further. The Employee Relations Officer, explains: “We do have one colleague who works in a specialist role which requires formal training. Much of the role involves liaising with surveyors, architects, landowners and builders over the phone and face-to-face. Recently, he felt he was struggling to keep up with conversation in group meetings, as well as using the telephone. We don’t want to lose his skills and talent and so we have made adaptations, with support from Access to Work, which enable him to carry out his job. He now has a Roger Pen, a wireless microphone, which enhances speech, to use in meetings and an amplified telephone. Without these adaptations, he wouldn’t be able to continue in his role and we would lose a highly-skilled employee.”

6 Further information and resources

Disability Confident

Employers can commit to being disability confident, which is a government scheme with the aim of giving employers the confidence to employ disabled people and ensure they can work to their potential. The scheme has 3 levels and is designed to support employers on their journey to become disability confident. By committing to the government's Disability Confident scheme, employers will have access to a wealth of information on employing people with disabilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

Access to Work

Access to Work is a government scheme which can provide practical advice and financial support for individuals whose health or disability, including mental health conditions, affects the way they do their job.

The type of support is tailored to an individual's needs and can include travel to work, support workers and specialist aids and equipment.

Access to Work does not replace the duty an employer has under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments. Instead it provides support that is over and above that which is a reasonable adjustment.

The amount of help an individual may receive from Access to Work depends on their individual needs and personal circumstances up to a maximum of £41,400 per year (from October 2015 for new customers and from April 2018 for existing customers).

For those with hearing loss, Access to Work could help fund communication support and equipment necessary to provide equal access in the workplace, as well as interviews. This can include the cost of communication professionals such as interpreters, and safety equipment like pagers and flashing light fire alarms.

Access to Work is available to people aged over 16 in the UK who:

- have an interview for a job
- are about to start work
- are currently in employment
- or are trying out a new job which has been sourced by Jobcentre Plus.

In cases where the employer and employee are unsure as to what support is required, a work-based assessment can be requested. The assessments offer practical advice on what equipment, support and reasonable adjustments can be made to support staff. These are normally provided and paid for by Access to Work.

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>

Remploy

Remploy have been providing jobs and support for disabled people (including those with hearing loss), for many years. As one of the UK's leading providers of specialist employment services they work with a wide range of local and national businesses within the public, private and third sectors. They showcase a variety of case studies to help employers and prospective employees manage disabilities in the workplace.

<http://www.remploy.co.uk/>

Equality Act

Fact sheet on the Equality Act available from: https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Files/Factsheets/Your%20rights/pdf/The%20Equality%20Act%202010_a%20summary%20guide%20Feb%202015.ashx

General

Better understanding on hearing loss:

<https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/your-hearing/about-deafness-and-hearing-loss.aspx>

Action on Hearing Loss' myth-busting guide for employers:

https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Documents/Campaigns/Workingforchange/A1325_WorkingforChange_MythBustingGuide_A4_v11_DIGITAL.ashx

Action on Hearing Loss has a guide to telling an employer you have hearing loss, which employers can bring to the attention of employees:

<https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/when-you-tell-your-employer-about-hearing-loss.aspx>

National Deaf Children's Society has produced a useful guide to recruiting and supporting deaf colleagues: Breaking the Sound Barrier: A guide to recruiting and supporting deaf colleagues

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=11439>

Action on Hearing Loss guide to getting help from the Jobcentre can be given to people who are looking for work:

<https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/getting-help-from-the-jobcentre.aspx>

7 Where to go for further help on hearing loss

Action on Hearing Loss

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Email: information@hearingloss.org.uk

Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

SMS: 0780 000 0360

Action on Hearing Loss is able to provide information or advice to employers on assistive products, the provision of communication support, their access solutions consultancy service, information provision and deaf awareness training.

Ear Foundation

Tel: +44 (0)115 942 1985

Email: info@earfoundation.org.uk

Web: www.earfoundation.org.uk

Provides services to families and professionals aiming to bridge the gap between clinic-based services where hearing technologies are developed and those who use them at work and home.

Hearing Link

Tel: 0300 111 1113

Email: enquiries@hearinglink.org

Web: www.hearinglink.org

Provides tailored support for employees and employers enabling them to achieve more effective communications in the workplace, thereby optimising productivity and job satisfaction.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus help for recruiters: <https://www.gov.uk/jobcentre-plus-help-for-recruiters>

Employer Services Line

Telephone: 0345 601 2001

Textphone: 0345 601 2002

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

National Deaf Children's Society

Tel: 0808 800 8880

Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk

Web: www.ndcs.org.uk

Provides support, information and advice for deaf children and young people, their families and professionals working with them.

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Department of Work and Pensions

Hearing Link

London Borough of Camden

The Ear Foundation

The Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance

The National Deaf Children's Society

Wessex Water

Western Power Distribution

Glossary

Audiologist

Audiologists specialise in identifying and assessing hearing and balance problems. They recommend and provide appropriate support, products and treatments to help alleviate the effects of hearing loss. Audiologists work both privately and for the NHS.

British Sign Language (BSL)

British Sign Language (BSL) is a form of sign language that is used in Britain and involves the use of hand movements, gestures, body language and facial expressions to communicate.

BSL interpreters

Sign language interpreters allow communication to take place between deaf sign language users and hearing people. In the UK this is usually between British Sign Language (BSL) and English. Sign language interpreters are regulated by a body called the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD), which is responsible for monitoring and development of professional standards. All registered interpreters are bound by the NRCPD's code of conduct – they have to respect confidentiality and stay completely impartial. <http://www.nrcpd.org.uk/>

Commissioning Framework

NHS England's framework for commissioning services for people with hearing loss provides practical tools, case studies and guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) on how

to improve the quality of care for people with hearing loss. The framework contains important information for CCGs on how to assess the hearing needs of local populations and commission high quality hearing services that focus on the needs of patients and ensure patients are signposted to other services that could help them, such as social services. It also sets out how CCGs should monitor outcomes from services to compare providers and improve quality. To find out more, please visit <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/07/hearing-loss-services/>

Communication professionals / communication support

There is a wide variety of communication support available. The type of communication support a person requires will depend on their communication needs. Types of communication support include:

- Sign language interpreters
- Speech-to-text reporters
- Notetakers

The right communication professional must be booked to ensure the service or workplace is accessible to a person with hearing loss.

Hearing Loop/Loop system

Also known as an induction loop, a loop system is an assistive listening device that can be used with hearing aids in places where it might be difficult to hear by reducing background noise. Loop systems are commonly available in public places such as banks, post offices and theatres.

Hearing aid users need to switch to the T or telecoil setting to use a loop system.

Lipreading

Lipreading is the interpretation of spoken words by watching a speaker's lips and facial expressions.

Next Generation Text Relay Service

Next Generation Text Relay is similar to text relay service, but it can be accessed using a smartphone, tablet or computer by downloading an app. The person with hearing loss makes the phone call and types the message to the relay assistant who speaks the words to the person at the other end of the phone call. The relay assistant then types the reply so it can read on the display on the app. For more information, visit: <https://ngts.org.uk/>

Speech-to-text reporter

Speech-to-text reporters (STTR) help people who are deaf to access audio information via a laptop or large screen. The reporter types a verbatim (word for word) account of what is being said and the information appears on screen in real time for users to read. For more information, please go to:

<https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/communication-support/types-of-communication-support-and-interpreters/speech-to-text-reporters.aspx>

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