



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024

Helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind

hearingdogs.org.uk



A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal

Hearing Dogs remains committed to helping as many deaf people and people with hearing loss as possible. Over the past year, the charity has helped thousands of people; through our clever, highly skilled dogs and other services. 151 dogs have been placed with deaf people and over 1,140 established partnerships have been supported. We have also further developed our community-based and peer support services across the UK.

Our dedicated volunteers remain an integral part of the charity; our volunteer dog trainers, those who care for the breeding dogs, those who help deliver our Hearing Link Services, and those who help in a myriad of other ways. As Royal Patron of Hearing Dogs, I would like to thank the entire network of over 3,000 volunteers across the country, without whom we would not be able to help as many deaf people and people with hearing loss.

In 2023, Hearing Dogs welcomed a second year of support from Pets at Home, through its summer fundraising appeal. This appeal, which also gave valuable

publicity to the charity, raised £650,000 to fund the training of hearing dogs, bringing the total donated by Pets at Home over a two-year period to over £1 million. As part of the appeal, many of our volunteers visited Pets at Home stores in their burgundy uniforms, many with dogs-in-training, to talk to store colleagues and customers about Hearing Dogs and what the charity does to change deaf people's lives. Thank you to all those who took the time to visit a store.

It is through the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of our volunteers and staff, and the generosity and kindness of our supporters, that Hearing Dogs can continue providing the right type of support to anyone who comes to the charity for help.

Looking to the future, we will build upon our forty-plus years of experience and knowledge to grow the charity through the provision of our dogs and other services, to continue transforming the lives of deaf people and people with hearing loss.



Lucy's hearing dog Wilbur has opened up her world again

Wilbur is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

My deafness came out of the blue – I was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called Granulomatosis with polyangiitis. At night, when I couldn't hear and I couldn't see, the loneliness was overwhelming.

I lived with constant worry about my personal safety. At my very worst points, I used to sleep a lot so there were fewer waking hours in the day, counting down the hours until bedtime.

Now, Wilbur brings warmth and connection every single day. Because I know he will alert me to sounds, I'm so much more relaxed.

Before, I lived life in the shadows, unable to join in. I feel like I'm truly living now and that's all because of Hearing Dogs.

- There are at least 50,000 children who are deaf in the UK
- 12 million people in the UK have hearing loss, that's about 1 in 5
- An estimated 1.2 million people in the UK have severe or profound deafness
- Hearing loss can lead to withdrawal from social situations, emotional distress, loneliness and depression
- Hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia by up to five times

RNID

The past year

Over the past year we have trained and placed 151 dogs with deaf people and provided ongoing support to over 1,140 established hearing dog partnerships across the UK. Each hearing dog is highly trained to alert deaf people to important and life-saving sounds, providing their deaf partners with a sense of safety, independence, and companionship, and increasing their wellbeing and quality of life.

Thousands more people with hearing loss have had their lives improved through our range of other services, including our peer support groups, both online and in-person in the community.

All our services are delivered with the help of volunteers. From dog training volunteers to volunteers providing peer support to people with hearing loss, we have over 3,000 volunteers around the country. Over the past year we have continued to invest in and develop our online learning resources for our volunteers, to expand their knowledge and ensure they remain fully supported in their roles.

Volunteers played a key role in the success of Pets at Home's Summer Fundraiser 2023, which ran throughout July for the second year and raised over £650,000 to help train more hearing dogs. This brings the total donated to Hearing Dogs by Pets at Home to over £1 million over a two-year



period. Volunteers visited hundreds of Pets at Home stores during July, to talk to store colleagues and customers about how hearing dogs transform deaf people's lives.

Our relationships with businesses that share our values help the charity to raise more money and more valuable awareness of the work we do. Over the past year we've worked with organisations such as Specsavers, Elite Hotels, Yakers, Burns Pet Nutrition, Agria Pet Insurance and others; to fundraise and raise awareness of deafness and the challenges deaf people face, and how our dogs help people overcome them.

In July, we welcomed our new Chief Executive, Tracy Griffin. Tracy joined us with extensive experience in the charity sector, coming to us from her post as CEO at The Big Issue Foundation and having previously worked in leadership roles at organisations such as Scope and NSPCC.

It is our talented and passionate team of volunteers and staff, and our generous supporters, who enable Hearing Dogs to transform the lives of deaf people. In the last year alone, thousands of people have supported the charity in different ways: by sponsoring a puppy, donating, playing our raffle or weekly lottery, taking on fundraising challenges, or kindly choosing to leave a gift to the charity in their Will.

Our Year in Numbers



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

5,968

Our services have helped over 5,968 people with hearing loss in the last 12 months

197,629

People reached through our website



3,083

Volunteers

502

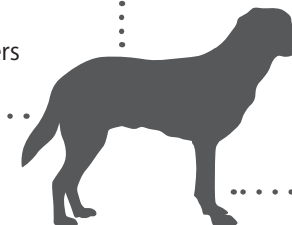
Applicants and enquirers

1,094

Adult hearing dog partnerships supported

47

Child hearing dog partnerships supported



151

Dogs placed with a deaf person

2,004

Partnership support visits

173

Puppies trained



Hearing Link
Services

153

LinkUp group attendees

550

1-2-1 support session participants

153

Hearing information day attendees



1,557

Community support event attendees



627

Helpdesk and LiveChat enquiries

146

Helpful Hours webinar attendees

6,396

Information downloads

Looking ahead

Over the coming year, and beyond, we remain committed to helping people who are deaf or have hearing loss, in ways that are right for them.

We will do this through our expertly trained hearing dogs and practical and emotional support services; enabling those we help to build connection, companionship and confidence. We will use the lived experience of our service users, alongside data and research, to develop our services and ensure we are providing the right help, in the right way, at the right time, to maximise impact.

We will continue to invest in and develop our network of over 3,000 volunteers nationwide, who are instrumental in our

ability to help thousands of people who are deaf or have hearing loss every year. Working closely with our dedicated staff, our volunteers train our puppies and dogs, care for our hearing dog 'mums and dads' who parent the next generation of hearing dog pups, help run our other services, raise vital funds and help spread the word about Hearing Dogs and our impact.

We will continue to develop new ways of recruiting volunteers, provide ongoing learning and development tools for existing volunteers, and ensure that everyone who gives up their time to volunteer for the charity feels well supported in their roles.

Raising awareness of the impact of hearing loss, and the many challenges people who are deaf or have hearing loss have to face, will form an important part of our work in the year ahead and beyond. We will focus on telling the stories and sharing the lived experience of the people we help, to draw more attention to the cause, highlight our services, encourage more people to support Hearing Dogs, and to recruit more volunteers.

We will invest in and develop our digital and data infrastructures and capabilities. This will ensure we remain a modern, future-proof charity that engages with our audiences in the way they need and makes data-informed decisions across all our activity – from our services, to volunteering, fundraising, and the way we engage with our donors.

We will continue to engage with and collaborate with companies and organisations who share our values, want to make a real difference to the lives of deaf people, and can help us achieve our strategic goals.

All our activity in the year ahead and beyond will be driven by staff who are talented, skilled, professional, and committed to making a real impact for the people we help. It is a priority for Hearing Dogs to continue investing in and developing our teams across all functions

of the charity; in order to deliver our organisational strategy effectively and ensure we are helping as many people who are deaf or have hearing loss as we can.

This can only be done with the support of our volunteers and donors, whose kindness in supporting Hearing Dogs has not only helped 5,968 people who are deaf or have hearing loss in the past year but will help us to continue this work into the future.



Our stories



Ann and Gryffin

I experienced a coma triggered by an auto-immune response to a virus. When I regained consciousness, I was profoundly deaf.

Three years later, my third son Marcus died in a car accident. Trying to deal with the police, the undertaker and coroner while not being able to hear what they were saying made an already difficult situation almost impossible.

Gryffin has helped me in so many ways. The bond we have is truly special and I know Marcus would have loved him too.

Gryffin helps people to understand my hearing loss, he alerts me to sounds and helps me to feel more comfortable explaining my hearing difficulties. I am incredibly grateful to his trainer and volunteers. Gryffin has an incredible zest, energy and love of life. I cannot imagine life without Gryffin!

Angie

When my hearing began to deteriorate, it left me struggling to do the job I loved - teaching.

I reached out to Hearing Dogs as I needed emotional support. After speaking with a support advisor, my husband and I signed up for a LinkUp support group. Talking to others who understood the challenges, sharing my own experiences, and learning more about audiology appointments, enabled me to put in place different strategies for managing my hearing loss.

The support group was a very nurturing environment, and the staff and volunteers were so caring and thoughtful. Knowing that I have access to this type of support while I wait to be matched with a life-changing hearing dog is amazing.



Lisa and Alfie

I lost my hearing over about three months. It was terrifying.

My anxiety got so bad that I really struggled being out in public – once I had an awful panic attack in a supermarket. So, I ended up shutting myself away at home. I felt useless.

Alfie completely turned everything around for me. It's like a totally different life. I often say he is my soulmate.

I feel safe with him in the house, knowing he will alert me if the smoke alarms went off. He gives me so much confidence. I went from not leaving the house, to going out every day. I feel more connected to the world around me with him there.

All the therapies I tried – cognitive behavioural therapy, other therapies, medication – nothing worked. But Alfie did.



Deryck and Elroy

I went to a very dark place after losing my wife, Sandra, during the COVID lockdown. I realised how much I'd relied on her; she had been my hearing aids.

Suddenly, I was completely on my own, in the middle of a pandemic, unable to go out. I began to wonder what the point was in going on.

Now, Elroy gives me a reason to get up in the morning. Before, I hardly knew anyone in my neighbourhood. Now, everyone talks to me. They all love Elroy and I couldn't be without him.

Soon after he arrived, he told me the smoke alarm was going off and I hadn't heard it at all. I still have days when I don't see or speak to anyone. But Elroy is always there.



Jamie and Arthur

Becoming profoundly deaf was the most soul-destroying thing to ever happen to me.

In 2020, I had an operation and lost 100% of my hearing. But I didn't just lose my hearing, I lost a part of myself. It felt like I was trapped behind a window. I could see people moving, but I had no idea what was happening. I became

too anxious and afraid to go outside on my own.

When Arthur arrived, for the first time in years, I finally felt like myself again. It's like my head is finally clear. He is my little shadow and he's there when I need him.

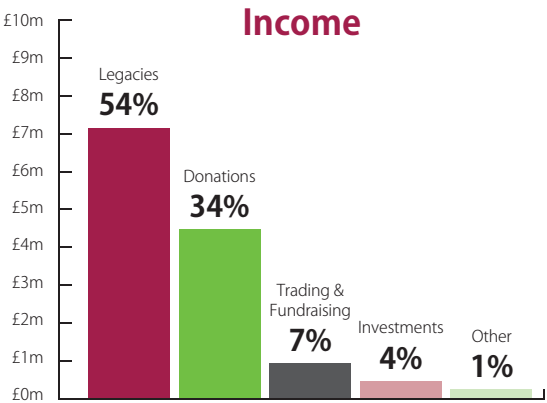
He is always so excited to see you and is always making me laugh! Being paired with such a happy, clever dog has made me feel human again.

Financial summary 2023/24

During 2023/24 we received total income of **£13.1million** and we spent **£13.3million**.

Our income in 2023/24 increased from the previous year predominantly due to higher legacy income of **£7.2million** versus £6.5m in 2022/23. Interest and investment income also increased.

Thanks to the performance of the investments held, the charity recorded an excess of income of **£0.6million** against a loss of **£0.3million** in the previous year.

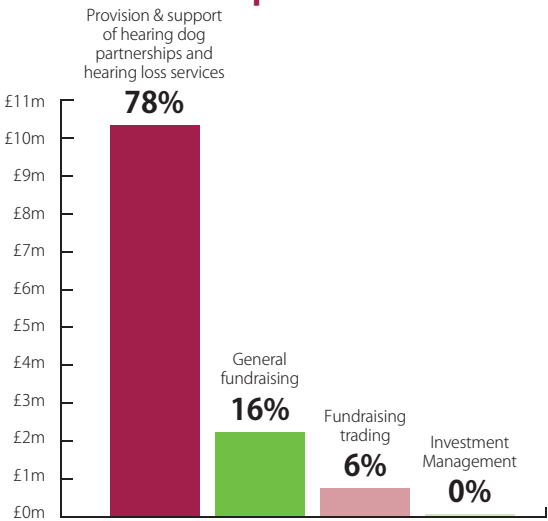


Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	£7,156	54%
Donations	£4,490	34%
Trading & fundraising	£924	7%
Investments	£465	4%
Other	£70	1%
Total	£13,105	100%

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024. For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please email info@hearingdogs.org.uk or telephone **01844 348100**.

Expenditure



How our funds were used:

Income:	£000	%
Provision & support of hearing dog partnerships and hearing loss services	£10,318	78%
General fundraising	£2,184	16%
Fundraising trading	£737	6%
Investment Management	£42	0%
Total	£13,281	100%





Could you help train a hearing dog?

We are looking for volunteers to help us care for and train our puppies and dogs.

A pup will live with you for between 6 to 18 months as you teach them the skills they need to become a life-changing hearing dog.

No previous experience is needed, and you'll have the full support of a local Hearing Dogs Training Instructor as you train the pup at home and at regular group training classes.

All costs are covered, and all food, bedding, toys and equipment is provided.

Find out more at hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People



Hearing Link
Services

The Grange
Wycombe Road, Saunderton,
Princes Risborough, HP27 9NS

T 01844 348100 (Text relay 18001 01844 348100)

E info@hearingdogs.org.uk **W** hearingdogs.org.uk

Royal Patron – Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal • **President** – Sir Stuart Hampson CVO DL

Co-Founder/Vice President – Dr Bruce Fogle MBE DVM MRCVS

Chair of Trustees – Christina O'Donovan-Rossa

Vice Chair of Trustees – Adrian M Horsley, Dip Arch, RIBA, JP, DL

Chief Executive – Tracy Griffin

You can find out more about our trustees by visiting our website at hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees

Registered charity in England and Wales no. 293358 and in Scotland no. SC040486