



IMPACT REPORT 2018-2019

Helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind
hearingdogs.org.uk

A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal

Our Charity has a straightforward objective: working towards a day when no deaf person feels alone. We progress towards this objective by breeding, training and supporting almost 1,000 Hearing Dogs partnerships across the UK. Our clever, affectionate, loyal dogs give their deaf partners joy and companionship, as well as being their ears. It is a joy to see.

Our role is becoming ever more vital as deafness continues to rise. Our friendly merger with Hearing Link enables us to help thousands more people with hearing loss, in more ways than ever before. Our LinkUp groups, helpdesk, and one-to-one support sessions all help those coming to terms with hearing loss, as well as their families and loved ones.

I was thrilled to revisit the Northern Training Centre in Bielby, 10 years after attending the opening ceremony. I witnessed the expansion of this wonderful facility, and the number of deaf people it has helped. It was an inspiring celebration of everyone's hard work – staff, volunteers and supporters alike.

This progress is equally impressive at the Southern Training Centre where we trained a record number of dogs. The Grange Restaurant & Gift Shop has become an established venue for quality food and gifts. It is warm and



welcoming, deaf-friendly by design, with acoustic flooring and special 'sound clouds' on the ceiling. All profits go towards helping more deaf people to leave loneliness behind.

That feeling of welcome, warmth, respect and kindness, is tangible whenever I visit. It sustains the Charity, and will continue to do so for many happy years to come.





Impact of hearing loss

Zach was diagnosed as deaf at just three years of age. As he grew, he couldn't pick up on conversations or play along with other children's games. So he started to lose confidence in his ability to engage with the world around him. Since hearing dog Echo came into his life, Zach has felt free and easy. He starts conversations with people now. He enjoys life. He no longer feels alone.

Zach Allen (aged 11): "Echo came and he changed everything. He helps me hear."

Kirsty Allen (Zach's mum): "The change in Zach since having Echo is amazing. He's so much happier now. He doesn't feel like he's separated from the family anymore, and he can overcome any barriers that life throws in his way."

- There are 50,000 children with hearing loss in the UK, around half are born with hearing loss.
- An estimated 900,000 people in the UK have severe or profound hearing loss.
- 1 in 6 people in the UK have hearing loss, that's 11 million people.
- 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.

Action on Hearing Loss



Helping more people



Hearing dogs are key in helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind. They provide love, companionship and emotional support. This gives deaf people confidence to reconnect with their family, friends and community, and embrace the life they want to lead. As importantly, our dogs help by alerting deaf people to life-saving sounds like smoke alarms and intruder alarms, and important sounds such as oven timers and baby monitors.

However, a hearing dog may not be the right solution for all lifestyles. Our friendly merger with Hearing Link has enabled us to help thousands more people with all levels of hearing loss, in more ways than ever before, by working closely with deaf people to establish what the right solution is for them.

As a result we now offer a wide range of personalised services, primarily led by peer volunteers who all have hearing loss or a direct understanding of the



challenges it presents. Together, as a community helping each other, they demonstrate that nobody needs to face hearing loss alone.

Our **helpdesk** is for individuals or their family members who have questions about hearing loss, who are seeking support, or need to speak to someone who understands. Information, guidance and empathy are in ample supply, from our knowledgeable volunteers who have personal experience of hearing loss.

We also have a strong network of **community support volunteers**.

They give their own time to help people with hearing loss, emotionally, personally and practically, through visits and regular contact. They also offer support for relatives, friends and colleagues, as well as advice about other local and national services.

Support groups are another way of helping people with hearing loss to reconnect with their communities – and make new friends along the way. We run different types of groups for different needs, all with the ultimate aim of making life easier for people with hearing loss. It's often through our groups that people realise they are not alone, finding inspiration from others to enjoy life and participate fully and confidently whatever their level of hearing.

Finally, as **technology** advances, our Hearing Hub service at The Grange in Buckinghamshire is a showcase for the latest assistive listening equipment.

It's also a centre for offering practical, impartial advice – again a service based on bespoke individual needs. The online shop at shop.hearinglink.org is also a comprehensive, convenient and accessible resource for people with all levels of hearing loss.



Our year in numbers

4,300

Our impact through all our services has helped over 4,300 deaf people over the last 12 months



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

45

Child hearing dog partnerships supported

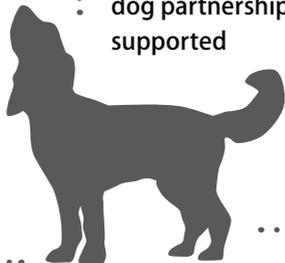
188

Dogs matched with a deaf person



964

Hearing dog partnerships supported



209

Puppies trained

3,012

Volunteers

2,682

Support visits

434

Applicants, including children

Hearing Link

499

Members

2,345

Helpdesk enquiries



998

People attending support programmes or receiving 1-2-1 sessions

162

Hearing loops checked across the UK and Northern Ireland

2,000

Products sold through our online shop





Sue Benham and Kristo

“Nobody knows why I have progressive hearing loss. Today, I am profoundly deaf.

As my hearing worsened, I increasingly found social life challenging. I couldn’t follow conversations. I pretended to laugh at jokes I couldn’t hear. Instead of celebrations, events became frustrating, embarrassing and isolating. I eventually stopped going to them as they were just too upsetting.

I was also bullied in three different jobs because of my hearing loss. This led to severe depression on each occasion.

I first found out about Hearing Link about ten years ago. I volunteered, and also attended some community events. I found a new level of confidence because no one thought I was stupid when I made a ‘mistake’ because of my hearing loss.

Today, I work for Hearing Link as a Technical Adviser, and I have my very own hearing dog, called Kristo! He helps me practically, by alerting me to the alarm clock, smoke alarm and cooker timer. His burgundy jacket also alerts people to my hearing loss, so I experience a lot less rudeness. I’m also a lot less lonely with Kristo around. He makes me laugh as he’s such a character!

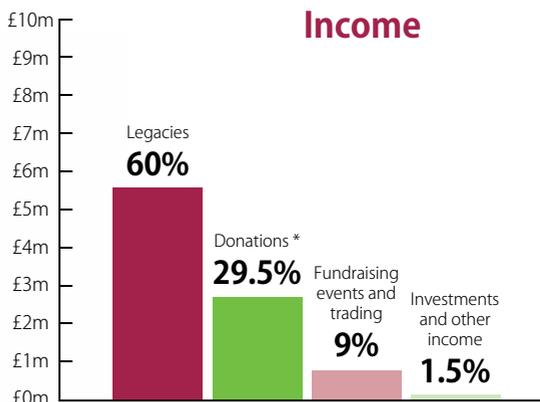
We go everywhere together. In fact, I can’t go very far without strangers stopping to ask why I have him, and what he does for me. Hospitals have nearly come to a standstill when the word goes out that Kristo is in the building!

Thanks to Kristo and Hearing Link, I have much more belief in myself to ‘belong’. I don’t feel lonely or depressed any more.”

Financial summary 2018/19

During 2018/19 we received total income of **£9.4 million** and we spent **£9.8 million**.

After adding net gains on investments of **£269,000** this resulted in a net movement in funds of **£156,000**.

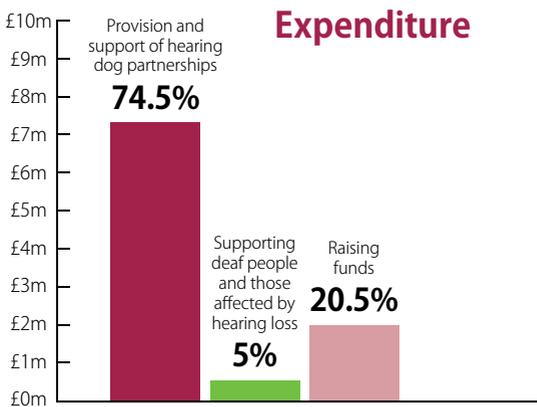


Where our funds came from:

| Income: | £000 | % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Legacies | 5,622 | 60 |
| Donations * | 2,777 | 29.5 |
| Fundraising events and trading | 873 | 9 |
| Investments | 110 | 1 |
| Other income | 51 | 0.5 |
| Total income | 9,433 | 100 |

* Donations including branch income, sponsorship and gift aid.

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019. For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please email info@hearingdogs.org.uk or telephone 01844 348100.



How our funds were used:

| Expenditure: | £000 | % |
|---|--------------|------------|
| Provision and support of hearing dog partnerships | 7,330 | 74.5 |
| Supporting deaf people and those affected by hearing loss | 520 | 5 |
| General fundraising | 1,429 | 14.5 |
| Fundraising trading | 528 | 5.5 |
| Investment management | 51 | 0.5 |
| Total expenditure | 9,858 | 100 |



The future

This year, we will be able to work with applicants to establish exactly what their needs are and discuss what kind of tailored solutions would work best for them. Then we can offer a personalised programme from our range of services which include assistive technologies, peer-to-peer support, group support, and/or hearing dogs.

Our newly opened Hearing Dogs National Breeding Centre is key to providing the required number of healthy, happy puppies needed to achieve our vision – of seeing a time when no deaf person feels alone.

It will enable us to expand and sustain our breeding scheme, while maintaining the highest level of welfare for all our breeding mums, stud dogs and puppies.

The Hearing Dogs National Breeding Centre will also form a hub from which we can coordinate our activities with approved external breeders, and continue to support our kind volunteers with litters born in their homes.

Finally, it will enable us to carry out health tests that would otherwise be conducted at veterinary practices, helping us save money and thereby help more people with hearing loss.

In every way, the Hearing Dogs National Breeding Centre will be of immense significance to our future plans and central to increasing the charity's impact in the coming years.



How you can help

 **Corporate support** offers fantastic opportunities to partner with us and includes sponsoring our high-profile events, making us your Charity of the Year, or naming a life-changing hearing dog.

 **Charitable trusts, foundations and major gifts** play a hugely significant role in helping more deaf children and adults. We can show real, tangible results from your support, with inspiring stories about how deaf people have rediscovered the confidence to lead full and rewarding lives.

 **Volunteers** are our life-blood: without them we simply could not exist. Our volunteer family helps us in so many ways, from being 'puppy parents' to training our amazing hearing dogs, from helping out in The Grange Restaurant & Gift Shop to maintaining our training centres. Volunteers also run our peer-to-peer services such as our helpdesk, community support services and support groups.

 **Puppy sponsorship** is very popular for people who wish to support a puppy's training journey, for themselves or as a gift. Just £3 a month buys a fantastic welcome pack full of puppy-related goodies, and then regular training updates right through to the pup becoming a hearing dog partnered with a deaf adult or child.

 **Legacies** are a way of showing incredible kindness to help deaf people for years to come. They are so important because they account for over half our funding. We are included in Gifts in Wills for many, varied reasons. Some people have personal experience of deafness, whilst others are hearing dog partners who have been helped by the Charity. But many legators have simply been touched by the work we do, and kindly choose to support us in their Will.

Royal Patron – Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal • **President** – Sir Stuart Hampson CVO
Chair of Trustees – Faith Clark • **Vice Chair of Trustees** – Dr Bruce Fogle MBE DVM MRCVS
Chief Executive – Michele Jennings BA LL.B MBA

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



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