

**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2020-2021

Helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind

[hearingdogs.org.uk](http://hearingdogs.org.uk)

# A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal



**As Patron of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, I am aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened some of the unique challenges facing deaf people. These include communication barriers caused by face coverings, and increased isolation and loneliness experienced during the lockdowns. Throughout this time, our charity remained committed to working towards our vision: a day when no deaf person feels alone.**

Against a backdrop of increasing numbers of deaf children and adults, we continue to train hearing dogs, support our partnerships, and help thousands of people with all levels of hearing loss through our range of personalised

services. Recent times have shown how individuals have shown great magnanimity in the face of adversity. Our volunteers have surprised us with their kindness and adaptability, our staff have shown remarkable ingenuity under demanding circumstances, and the generosity of our supporters has been steadfast. To all of you, I say a genuine 'thank you'.

As we approach our 40th year, we see how far the charity has come. We trained our first hearing dog Lady in 1982, and we now help thousands of deaf people every year, whether it is through immediate help as they cope with the initial loss of their hearing for the first time, or providing a lifetime of assistance and support if needed.

The help we give to deaf people is only possible thanks to our loyal supporters. We have plans for the next five years and beyond to support even more people with hearing loss. We will achieve this by taking sensible steps to scale up our established services. We remain committed to meeting the needs of deaf children and adults, and we remain true to our values of kindness, professionalism and courage. They will be our guide over the course of many years to come.





## Kim and Bear



"I've had the support of Hearing Dogs for over 25 years. From my first hearing dog Charlie, to my second hearing dog Eva, and my current hearing dog Bear, I have always felt so supported by the Charity. I can't express how much these wonderful dogs have changed my life.

"Before having a hearing dog, I had to give up a career I loved in nursing because of my deafness. I felt really lonely. Like I had no purpose.

"Charlie, Eva and Bear have each given me so much confidence and have made me feel that it's OK to be deaf. They just opened up my life. They've taught me so much and have given me so much love.

"Thank you with all my heart, to everyone who has made this possible."

- 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 adults 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



# How Hearing Dogs responded to the pandemic

**Against a backdrop of lockdowns, social distancing, and other restrictions, we quickly and calmly adapted in order to continue helping deaf people. We had 1,600 dogs and thousands of beneficiaries to consider, but our journey through the pandemic was made smoother with the support of our volunteers, the adaptability of our staff, the selflessness of our beneficiaries and the kind loyalty of our supporters.**

Hearing dogs are the heart of everything we do. They help deaf children and adults practically by alerting them to important sounds such as the alarm clock and oven timers, and life-saving sounds such as the fire alarm. They also support deaf people emotionally, providing love and companionship, giving them the confidence to leave behind the loneliness that deafness often brings. It was crucial that we continued training these amazing dogs during the pandemic, and we did so with the help of our innovative dog training volunteers and dedicated staff.

We also offer an ever-expanding range of other personalised services which help even more people with any level of hearing loss. Many of these had to be delivered online as we faced the pandemic; joining our existing range of online services, such as our Helpdesk



which is staffed by friendly volunteers with lived experience of hearing loss.

Throughout the last year, we also gave away thousands of useful products such as 'I have hearing loss' and 'I'm a lipreader' badges and wristbands, to help people who relied on lipreading while face coverings were mandatory.

Our services greatly improve quality of life. They reduce anxiety, depression, and isolation. They improve overall mental health, physical health, and independence. They help people with hearing loss to leave loneliness behind and reconnect with the world around them.

We want to see a day where no deaf person feels alone, and the pandemic has made us more committed than ever to helping as many people as we can, for as long as they need.

# Our year in numbers

# 3,263

Our impact through all our services has helped over 3,263 deaf people over the last 12 months



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# 50

Child hearing dog partnerships supported

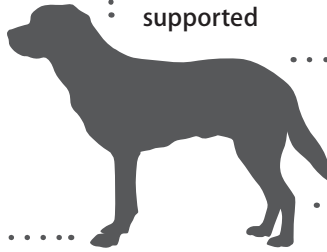
# 159

Dogs matched with a deaf person



# 962

Hearing dog partnerships supported (adult)



# 182

Puppies trained

# 3,112

Volunteers

# 355

Face-to-face visits

# 360

Applicants, including children

**Hearing Link**

# 502

Members

# 1,769

Helpdesk enquiries



# 3,781\*

people received free hearing loss awareness products

# 24

LinkUp Online attendees (trial phase)

over

# 500,000



people visited our website for information and advice

Please note that due to the pandemic some of our services were temporarily paused.  
\*this figure is not included in the 3,263 above.



In 2009, HRH The Princess Royal opened The Beatrice Wright Centre, East Riding of Yorkshire



Gill Lacey and Tony Blunt with the first trainee hearing dogs



Pip and hearing dog Gino

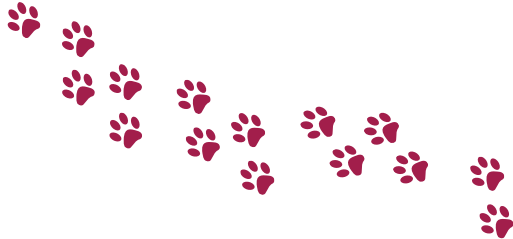
## Our history and our future

**As we approach our 40th year, we reflect on the time when our very first dog was trained in the home of Gill Lacey, our longest standing staff member.**

We have grown steadily but substantially since then. We have vastly increased the number of hearing dogs we place with deaf people, moved to bigger premises in order to train more dogs, opened our Northern Training Centre, established our National Breeding Centre, and greatly expanded the services we provide to help anyone with hearing loss.

Today, through the kindness of our supporters, and the commitment of our volunteers and staff, we are helping thousands of deaf people and those with hearing loss, practically and emotionally.

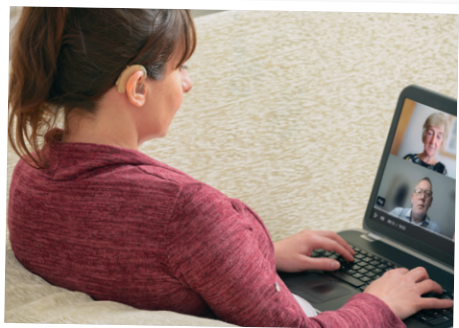
Hearing Dogs is a flexible and resilient charity. During the pandemic, many of the activities we normally carry out at our training centres or in-person in people's homes, such as introducing hearing dogs to their deaf partners and providing ongoing support to all our partnerships, were instead delivered online.



We learnt during the pandemic that parts of our service delivery work well digitally, such as the online support we provided to our hearing dog partnerships and our LinkUp Online support groups, and we will continue to offer and grow this type of support alongside our face-to-face support.

As we look to the future, we have one goal. To help as many people with hearing loss as possible, for as long as they need. The loyalty of our supporters during the pandemic has meant we have remained stable and unwavering in order to do this. We secured funds specifically for renovations to buildings at our sites, so we can have new space to run face-to-face services for people with hearing loss. We have also retained some funds to resolve any unforeseen issues which may materialise as a result of the pandemic.

We are positive about the future. We plan to help over 36,000 people with hearing loss over the next five years. We will do this by investing in and further developing our Hearing Link Services to provide a wide range of specialised services for those impacted by hearing loss. We will also steadily increase the number of highly skilled hearing dogs we train every year, carefully matching each dog to the individual lifestyle needs of their deaf partners and then supporting these partnerships throughout the dogs'



ten-year working lives. Many of our deaf partners will be supported for many more years as they are matched with a second or third dog.

Our 3,000 strong volunteer family will be integral to this. Working alongside dedicated staff they will help train our puppies, raise vital funds, help run our personalised services, and so much more.

Deafness and hearing loss is increasing, and we are set up to offer life-changing services to more people who reach out to us. So now, more than ever, we need your support to help achieve our vision of a day when no deaf person feels alone.



# Our stories



“With Angus around, I feel so safe. Practically, Angus helps me by alerting me to sounds – the smoke

alarm, the doorbell. He even tells me about medical text alerts. He is also the most compassionate, kind and caring dog I have ever come across. When I contracted Coronavirus, I honestly don't think I would have made it without Angus pouring his love and strength into me. He was my lifeline.”

**Marika and hearing dog Angus**

“The staff and volunteers are so helpful, passionate and full of tips and tricks to help boost confidence. I was encouraged to be me. I was born with hearing loss and at nearly 50 years of age you would think I would have accepted it but unfortunately that wasn't the case. LinkUp Online allowed me to “meet” (virtually) loads of people in the same boat as me. With Hearing Link's help I am slowly building my confidence and not apologising for my disability any more.”

**Victoria, LinkUp Online participant and hearing dog applicant**



“One day, William broke down and asked me through his tears why

he was deaf. All I could do was hold him and comfort him, while my heart silently broke. William now has a very special friend: hearing dog Nutmeg, a big, bouncy Cockapoo. Today, William is still profoundly deaf, but wants to be part of the world around him, thanks to Nutmeg. He reconnects William to his happier self.”

**Debbie, William's mum**

“My enquiry went to an excellent volunteer responder, who replied very quickly. I was then offered a one-to-one online session to talk through services that might help, and also generally about how I was managing my hearing and invited to join the next ‘LinkUp Online’ session. This was a real turning point. Many of us who are severely hearing impaired can feel very ‘left out’ and isolated both in social situations and in day-to-day interactions. It was really good to have the opportunity to share these feelings with others who understand only too well what it's like. I would urge anyone with hearing loss to contact Hearing Link.”

**Meg, Helpdesk user, LinkUp Online participant and hearing dog recipient**





“With Eddison, I know we are safe, and that my daughter won’t grow up with me relying on her. Eddison also

helped during lockdown. There were even more barriers, because people wore face coverings, so I couldn’t lip-read. I started to worry about everything again. As everything else was changing, Eddison’s support remained the same. He’s always giving me that eye contact, letting me know he’s still there and that everything is OK.”

**Chalky and hearing dog Eddison**



“Having Clay has made a huge difference to people’s awareness of my deafness, and I can’t put into words the value of that to me. Yes, Clay alerts me to important sounds but there’s so much more. Clay makes my deafness visible but in the most reassuring way. He transforms my world and my ability to cope with life. Life without a hearing dog by my side? Well, I don’t know how I’d cope to be honest.”

**Philip and hearing dog Clay**



“I was trapped by deafness for 12 years. I didn’t like going out. I didn’t like people talking to me. I only felt safe at home. I felt so isolated. Theo has given me courage – the desire, the will – to escape my prison. Now, thanks to Theo, I’m free. He’s my world and I wouldn’t, couldn’t be without him.”

**John and hearing dog Theo**



“Practically, Gino is amazing. His soundwork is so great. But it’s Gino’s companionship that has helped Pip blossom, to reveal this wonderful, vibrant, unique and independent person who had felt so lost for 28 years. There is nothing better than seeing Pip finally able to grow into her own person – to see her happy.”

**Lucy, Pip’s mum**

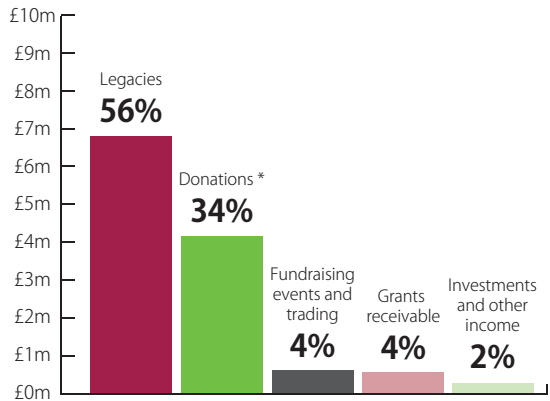
# Financial summary 2020/21

During 2020/21 we received total income of **£12.3 million** and we spent **£9.5 million**.

We had unexpected record income in 2020/21 and were supported during the pandemic by kind donations, loyal sponsors and generous legacies. These additional funds are being used wisely to enable our services to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

After adding net gains on investments of **£1.4 million** this resulted in a net movement in funds of **£4.2 million**.

## Income



## Where our funds came from:

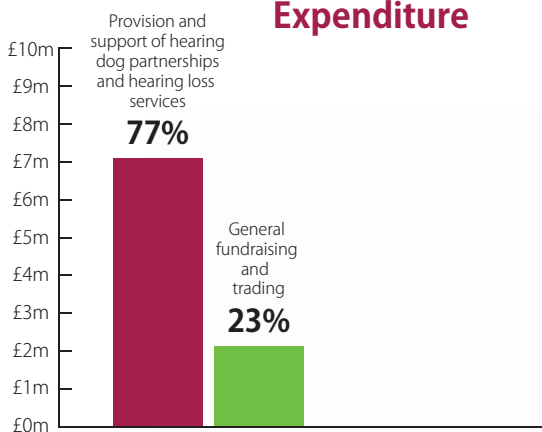
Income:	£000	%
Legacies	6,844	56
Donations*	4,178	34
Fundraising events and trading	546	4
Grants receivable	473	4
Investments	84	1
Other income	157	1
<b>Total income</b>	<b>12,282</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Donations includes branch income, sponsorship and gift aid.



This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021. For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please email [info@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:info@hearingdogs.org.uk) or telephone **01844 348100**.

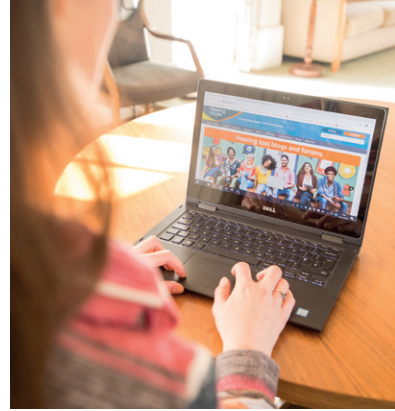
## Expenditure



### How our funds were used:

Expenditure:	£000	%
Provision and support of hearing dog partnerships and hearing loss services	7,333	77
General fundraising	1,758	19
Fundraising trading	347	4
Investment management	48	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>9,486</b>	<b>100</b>





## How you can help

It is an honour to help change deaf people's lives, and one you can experience too.

From donating, sponsoring a puppy, volunteering, leaving a gift in your Will, or encouraging your place of work to support Hearing Dogs, your help will change the lives of deaf children and adults. Thank you.



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You can find out more about our trustees by visiting our website at [hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees](http://hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees)

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