



IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022

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

A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal

As the Hearing Dogs family celebrates 40 years of helping deaf people, we reflect on how far the Charity has come. Since 1982 we have grown steadily and, thanks to our kind and dedicated supporters, volunteers, and staff, we now help thousands of deaf people and people with hearing loss every year, whether through one-off enquiries or a lifetime of support.

As we celebrate our 40th year, we reflect on recent challenges. The Charity, like many other charities, is still experiencing some of the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but as an agile and adaptable organisation we are well equipped to face them.

Over the past year, as Hearing Dogs recovered from the pandemic, we carefully returned to holding events in the community. We could once again offer our hearing loss services face to face, and we could resume our in-person support of nearly 1,100 new and established hearing dog partnerships. Much of the digital and online support we introduced during the pandemic has remained, so that even more people can access our help.

We were also able to resume training our dogs in public places, such as in shops and on public transport, all vital for highly trained assistance dogs that will accompany their deaf partners everywhere they need to go.



Thanks to our wonderful supporters, volunteers, and staff, we have held a very 'steady ship' and continue working towards our vision: a day when no deaf person feels alone. To all of you, I say 'thank you'.

As we look to the future, we see a continuation of our five-year plan; steady growth of our services, remaining committed to helping deaf people and people with hearing loss, and ensuring that kindness, professionalism, and courage are at the core of everything we do.





Janice and her hearing dogs



“Having a hearing dog just means everything to me. From my first hearing dog Dolly, to Josie my second, Marti my third, and now Humphry my current hearing dog, they’ve transformed life for me over the past three decades.

“My hearing loss caused lots of problems. I felt very isolated. I had little confidence. It affected my daily life greatly.

“Each of my hearing dogs has opened doors for me as a person to grow in confidence, to feel able to tackle things better in daily life. Their companionship, their love and devotion is truly wonderful.

“I am so grateful to Hearing Dogs and all the kind people who support the Charity. They’ve made a difference to my life in huge ways.”

- 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

Overcoming the challenges of the pandemic

The kindness of our donors and fundraisers, and the flexibility and ingenuity of our volunteers and staff, meant we were able to navigate effectively through the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are still experiencing some of its ongoing effects, as an agile and adaptable charity we are well equipped to face them.

Over the past year, as Hearing Dogs recovered from the pandemic, we were able to carefully return to holding events in the community. We were able to provide our hearing loss services face to face again, and we could resume our in-person support of nearly 1,100 new and existing hearing dog partnerships.



The digital and online support we introduced during the pandemic helped many deaf people and people with hearing loss and has remained an important part of our service offering.

We were also able to restart our face-to-face puppy training classes and resume training our dogs in public places - crucial for highly trained assistance dogs that will accompany their deaf partners everywhere.



However, the pandemic caused inevitable challenges that Hearing Dogs is still seeing the effects of. During the pandemic we had to halt the breeding of new litters of hearing dog puppies, and pause many aspects of our training programme, to comply with national and local Covid regulations. This means we are still striving to train and partner the same number of hearing dogs as we were able to pre-Covid. As our clever dogs can take 18-24 months to fully train, and we take everything at the right pace for each individual dog, it will likely take a year or two until we see a return to our pre-Covid numbers.

Despite these challenges, we have still been able to create 162 new hearing dog partnerships in the past year, support each of our existing partnerships and provide other services to support thousands of people with hearing loss.

Thanks to the kindness of our supporters, and the dedication and passion of our volunteers and staff, we continue working towards our vision: a day when no deaf person feels alone.

Our year in numbers

3,176

Our impact through all our services has helped over 3,176 deaf people over the last 12 months



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

50

Child hearing dog partnerships supported

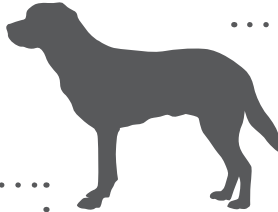
162

Dogs matched with a deaf person



1,019

Adult hearing dog partnerships supported



245

Puppies trained

3,093

Volunteers

299

Applicant assessments

345

Applicants, including children



Hearing Link
Services

289

Hearing Link members

58

LinkUp Online support group participants (10 events)



242

Peer-to-peer Support sessions



Over

510,000

people visited our website...



1,229

Helpdesk and Livechat enquiries

Looking ahead

As the Hearing Dogs family celebrates 40 years of changing deaf people's lives, and reflects on the challenges of the pandemic, we also look to the future.

As a charity, we always think long term because this is the kind of support we provide to deaf people. When someone comes to the Charity for help, we are able to provide different types of support based on the needs of the individual. For some, a one-to-one conversation and guidance on how to approach their hearing loss journey will empower them to begin overcoming the challenges they face. For others, their specific needs means that they will require support from the Charity for years, or even decades.

We are well equipped to provide this support, whether that is through our clever and highly-trained hearing dogs, or through our range of other personalised services, such as online or in-person support groups or our Helpdesk. Our kind supporters, adaptable and committed volunteers, and dedicated and professional staff will be key to the steady and sensible growth the charity plans for the next five years and beyond.

We plan to help more people with hearing loss over the next five years. We will do this by continuing to invest in and further develop and integrate our Hearing Link Services, to provide agile, responsive and holistic support to anyone



who needs help with their hearing loss. For example, if someone comes to us for help and their needs and lifestyle mean they would benefit from a hearing dog, we will also discuss with them which of our other services might help them while they are waiting for their dog. They may benefit from some peer support through our LinkUp support groups, for example, or perhaps they would benefit from guidance on what technology is available to make life easier for them.



These are just some of
our incredible volunteers



While the pandemic meant we experienced an unavoidable dip in the number of dogs we were able to breed and train over the past year, we have been able to resume the breeding of pups that will go on to become highly skilled hearing dogs. With the help of our dedicated volunteers and staff, we will be focused in the coming year on steadily bringing the number of dogs we can train and place with deaf people to pre-Covid levels.

We will continue providing ongoing support to our existing service users, both in person and online. One of the ways we support these people, is by holding our popular Community Days across the UK. These are days held to provide more opportunities for deaf people and people with hearing loss to access support,

meet other people who have similar experiences, share tips and tools on living with hearing loss, and make friends.

Over the past year we have held 41 Community Days across the UK, and we will be increasing this number to 50 over the next year.

Our 3,000-strong volunteer family will be integral to our ability to continue helping thousands of deaf people and people with hearing loss every year. Working alongside dedicated staff, they train our puppies, help run our personalised services, raise vital funds, and spread the word about Hearing Dogs. It is only with their support, and the support of our kind donors, that we can continue working towards our vision of a day when no deaf person feels alone.

Our stories

James and Kandy

"Kandy has helped James to break free from the insecurity and anxiety that held him down. He's growing in confidence daily. Bedtimes used to be extremely difficult. He felt terribly unsafe and anxious because it was dark as well as silent. Now, James knows Kandy is there, curled up beside him. There is no more broken sleep, no more fretting before bed. Kandy alerts James to sounds and is there for him when he feels down. If you ask James, he'll tell you "Kandy makes me feel joyful and happy."

Lisa, James's mum



Kay

"I love LinkUps. Having hearing loss can feel very scary, confusing and isolating and it's so nice to meet with others in similar situations, and to share experiences and coping methods. I also learnt new information that could be really helpful, which hadn't been suggested to me by my audiologist or ENT consultant. It's just so important to be aware of all possible options and to get this information from others who live with hearing loss."

Elizabeth

"As a LinkUp participant, it was such a relief that I found I wasn't alone with my hearing loss worries. I didn't need to hide my disability and I found expert help and friendship in the group."

Shmita and Harris

"My world used to be silent, lonely and full of anxiety. My hearing dog Harris is amazing. With him the house no longer feels empty. The room lights up with Harris beside me and that makes me feel really, really, happy.

I had been depressed and lonely for most of my life. I'm never lonely now. Harris also tells me about things like when the microwave pings or someone is at the door or if the smoke alarm goes. I feel I've got that safety net with me all the time. Harris has completely changed my life."





Meg and Sparky

"The positive difference my boy Sparky has made to my life is almost immeasurable.

He helps me in many practical ways, alerting me to the alarm clock, cooker timer, and smoke alarms, but equally important for me is the companionship and sense of security he gives me.

"I've also had additional help and support from the Charity's Hearing Link Services. I've used the Helpdesk and had a one-on-one session to talk through how I was managing my hearing. I've also attended a LinkUp support group online. It was really good to share experiences and ideas with others who understand only too well what it's like to have difficulties with your hearing."

David and Asti

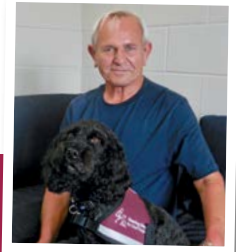
"Hearing Link Services and my hearing dog Asti made a light appear at the end of a long, dark tunnel.

"My deafness brought me isolation. I felt desperate and suicidal at times, I wanted to give up on life. It was so hard, and I just wanted it all to end.

"When I attended a LinkUp support group, I met people who really understood and provided empathy. I realised that, with the right type of support, I could lead a normal life again.

"Since having Asti, I do not feel isolated anymore. We share our day and enjoy the outdoors together. She is so loving.

"She has given me hope again, belief in myself, and I am enjoying life again rather than enduring it. Asti and Hearing Link Services have both been life changers for me."

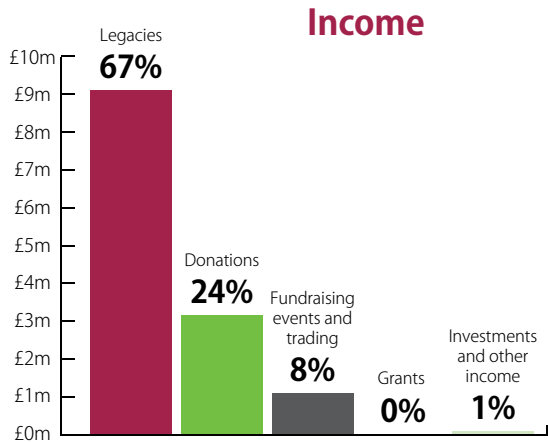


Financial summary 2021/22

During 2021/22 we received total income of **£13.7 million** and we spent **£11.2 million**.

We had unexpected record income in 2021/22, predominantly due to the generosity of our legators. We were very grateful to receive £9.1m through Gifts in Wills, £2.3m more than the previous year. These additional funds will be used to help change the lives of more deaf people and people with hearing loss.

After adding net gains on investments of **£0.6 million** this resulted in a net movement in funds of **£3.1 million**.

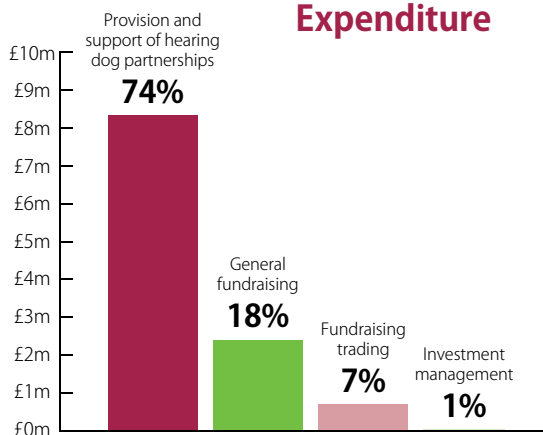


Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	9,130	67
Donations	3,260	24
Fundraising events and trading	1,119	8
Grants	38	0
Investments and other Income	190	1
Total	13,737	100

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022. 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:

Expenditure:	£000	%
Provision and support of hearing dog partnerships and hearing loss services	8,340	74
General fundraising	2,042	18
Fundraising trading	791	7
Investment management	55	1
Total expenditure	11,228	100





How you can help

It is a joy to be able to help people with hearing loss and change deaf people's lives and this is something that you can be part of too.

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



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People



Hearing Link
Services

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