



Helpful Hour:
Your homelife, your hearing



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

Hearing Link Services

3. Friends – at home and out and about

Friendship – why it's important

Friendship matters – it boosts wellbeing, self-esteem, and belonging. But hearing loss can make it harder to connect. You might worry about whether you'll hear, feel a loss of control, or lose confidence. These challenges can lead to negative thoughts and make you less likely to join social events.

Overcoming barriers is possible!



Inviting friends to your home

One way to reduce some of the challenges associated with hearing loss is to invite friends to your home where you have more control over the hearing environment. You could:

- Stick to small groups to make conversations easier to follow.
- Cook and prepare ahead so you can spend more time face-to-face and keep up with conversations more easily.
- Create a table plan so you can put yourself in the best seat for your hearing.
- Think about lighting; you need to be able to see people clearly.
- Keep in the loop. If you're not sure what's being discussed, ask.
- Think about what technology could help.

According to RNID's It Does Matter (2024) survey of over 5,300 people with hearing loss, deaf people and BSL users in the UK, 67% said they had experienced negative attitudes or behaviours in the past year, and a third (33%) of those said they felt lonely or isolated as a result.

Accepting invitations outside your home:

- Be upfront about your hearing loss – if people don't know about your hearing, they can't try to support you.
- Negotiate the venue where possible – if the choice is a noisy restaurant or someone's home then have your say and express what works better for you.
- Consider where you sit, bear in mind the lighting and background noise levels.
- Adopt a strategy for large gatherings. Aim for one-to-one conversation.
- Enlist the support of a friend to fill any gaps in conversations.
- Use technology to support your hearing.
- Control the time you stay – a positive, manageable couple of hours is better than a difficult, tiring evening. Think about how long you think you can best manage and set that as your guide.

Set realistic expectations:

- One good conversation is a success.
- Focus on progress – a small step forward is better than no step forward.
- Don't feel bad if you turn down an invitation. Explain why you've declined and take some time to think if there are any measures or tools that could enable you to accept a similar invite in the future.

Try a hearing buddy

If possible, ask a friend or family member to be your hearing buddy. That sounds formal but it's very straight forward. A hearing buddy can fill in information you might have missed. If you join a conversation that's in full flow, they can give you the context of what is being talked about. It's a simple trick that can give you more confidence and have a positive impact.

Useful links

(These links open external sites. We are not responsible for content on these sites.)

Get your copy of our 'It Matters' communication guide filled with simple tips to help support communication – hearingdogs.org.uk/communication-guide

To read the full RNID 'It does matter report' visit – hearingdogs.org.uk/RNIDreport