



Helpful Hour:
Your homelife, your hearing



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

Hearing Link Services

1. Your home and household – looking after yourself

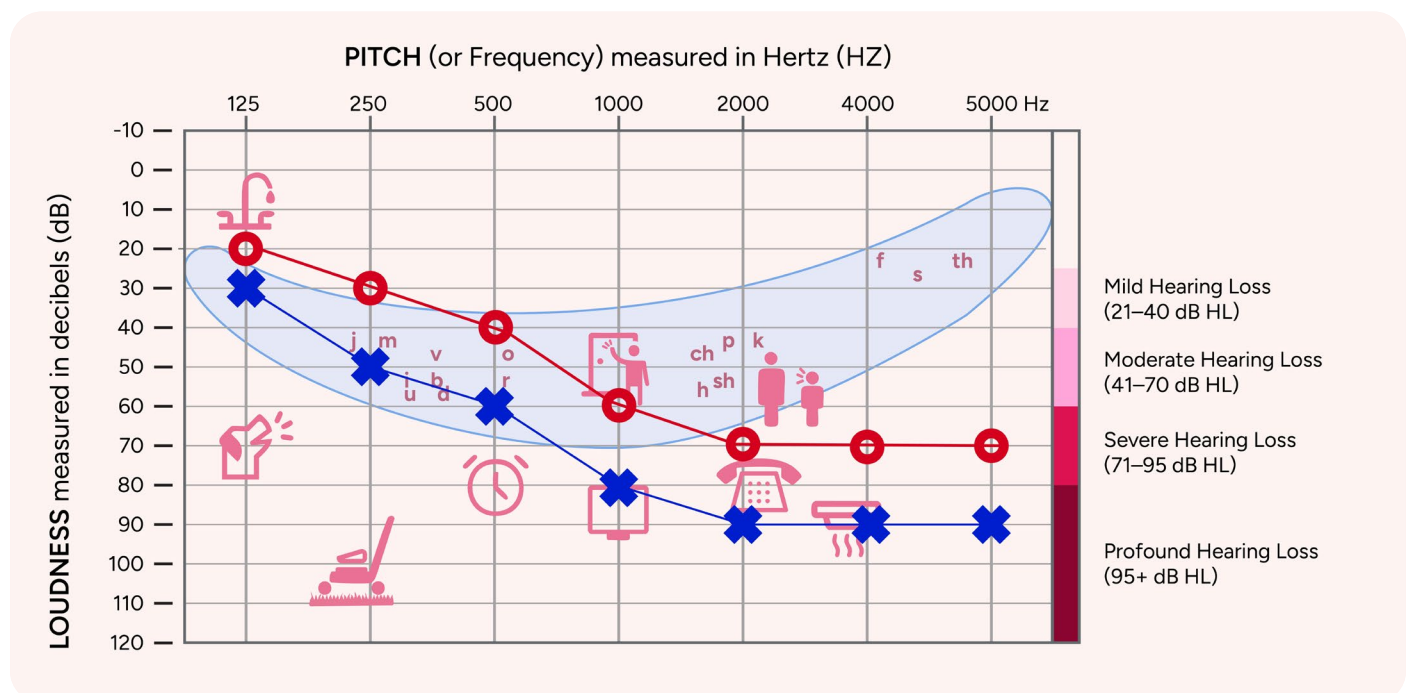
Every home and family is unique and hearing loss affects lives in many ways. Whatever your situation, finding solutions that work for you and help you to manage better is essential.

Explaining your hearing to others

It may seem obvious but explaining what you can and cannot hear is really the first step to living better with hearing loss. Helping your friends and family understand your hearing challenges is a positive step towards making life easier and creating a safer environment for you at home.

When you are thinking about explaining your hearing consider these things:

- Just telling people you have hearing loss doesn't always help. It can be quite difficult for them to understand the impact it has on you.
- You can use the 'speech banana' below to explain what sounds you can or cannot hear and how that affects your day-to-day life.



In this example anything shown above the red (right ear) or blue (left ear) line would not be heard. This person would find it hard to hear the telephone and j, m, v, o and r sounds and would not be able to hear a tap dripping or ch, p, f, s, th sounds for example.

Remember to ask your audiologist for a copy of your audiogram.

Your home environment

Your home should be somewhere you can relax and feel secure. So, it's important you invest some time to think about how you can minimise any challenges your hearing loss creates. Be solutions focused! There are simple things you can change that make a big difference:

- **Lighting** – crucial for lipreading and visual cues. If you can't see the person clearly, it'll be harder to hear them, so make sure your living areas are well-lit.
- **Noise reduction** – try to limit background noise (like washing machines, tv, radio) so you can focus more on the sounds you most want to hear.
- **Room acoustics** – adding soft furnishings like carpets, curtains and upholstered furniture helps to cushion sound, reduce echo and make it a little easier to focus.
- **Layout** – consider arranging seating in small groups rather than spread out so it's easier to see faces, lipread and follow conversations.

Looking after yourself

Prioritising your needs is a must and will have a positive effect on everyone who lives with you or visits your home.



Bear in mind that living with hearing loss can be tiring. If you need to, take a little break and recharge:

- Consider removing your hearing aids (if you use them) or finding a peaceful spot.
- Do some breathing exercises or relaxation techniques.
- When you're ready you can pick up where you left off hopefully with a little more energy than before.

Useful links

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

Learn more about hearing loss – hearingdogs.org.uk/support/hearing/about

Creating a good communication environment – hearingdogs.org.uk/NDCSAdvice

Breathing exercises – breatheyourbestlife.com

Find out more about hearing tests and the speech banana – hearingdogs.org.uk/testing



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2. Family – coping with people, events and occasions

Family events can be challenging when you have hearing loss. With a little planning, clear communication, and the right tools, you can make social gatherings more enjoyable and inclusive for everyone.

Family events

Plan in advance, think about:

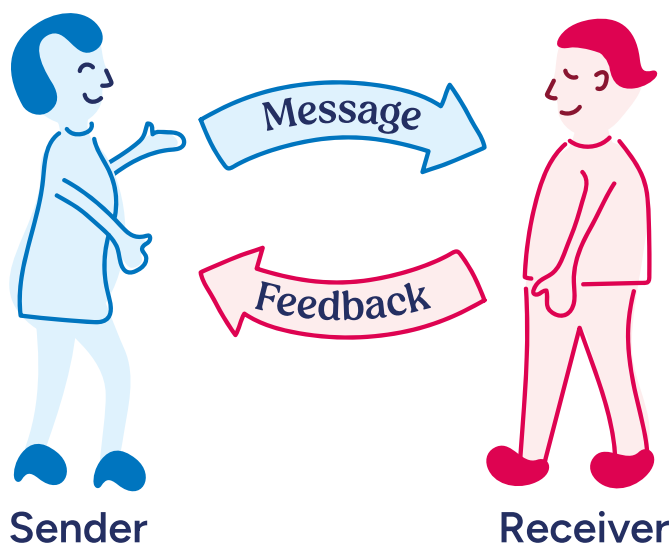
- The size of the event and how that might impact your hearing.
- How long you think you can manage.
- What will work for you.

Make your needs clear

Invest some time to explain your hearing to your family so they can understand what your hearing loss means for you:

- Use the speech banana to explain what you can and cannot hear.
- Show them any technology you use and explain how it helps.
- Share strategies that work for you.

Communication is a two-way process, both sides need to make an effort for it to work.



Communication tips

DO

- ✓ Get the person's attention
- ✓ Keep eye contact
- ✓ Speak clearly / introduce the subject
- ✓ Speak one at a time
- ✓ Repeat back questions
- ✓ Smile and be friendly
- ✓ Write it down
- ✓ Use speech-to-text apps

DON'T

- X Talk too slowly or too fast
- X Shout or talk too loudly
- X Exaggerate gestures or speech
- X Stand with bright light behind you
- X Cover your mouth
- X Say "It doesn't matter"

Communication tools

There are many ways you can support communication including:

- Speech-to-text apps
- Fingerspelling
- Lipreading
- British Sign Language (BSL) or Sign Supported English (SSE).

Explore what might work for you and share your learning with your family.

Speech to text apps

NALScribe, Cardzilla, Live Transcribe and Otter are all free speech to text apps, Check which work on your phone.

“

**“If I can't see the words on your lips,
I cannot hear what you say”**

– Merleen, Peer Support Volunteer

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Useful links

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

Lipreading classes – [atalipreading.org.uk](https://atlalipreading.org.uk)

Learn more about living well with hearing loss – hearingdogs.org.uk/at-home

How to communicate with someone with hearing loss – hearingdogs.org.uk/communication



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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



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4. Technology – what helps?

Tools and technologies can make life with hearing loss a little easier and more enjoyable. Consider the challenges you face and work towards finding solutions that suit you.

Home alerts:

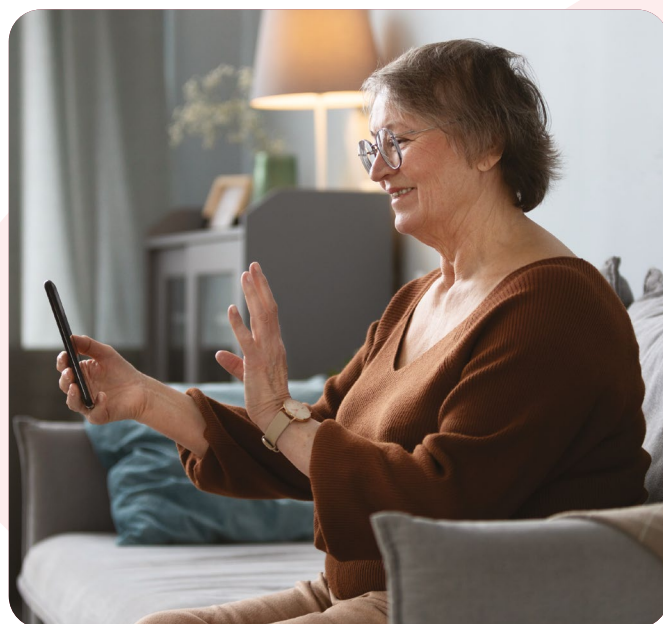
- **Waking up:** try an alarm clock with a vibration pad, extra loud alert, flashing light, or a smartwatch that can vibrate.
- **Visitors:** solutions include a portable wireless doorbell, a Signolux Tower (flashing symbols, loud tones, portable around the house) or a video doorbell linked to your phone.
- **Other alerts:** there are a wide range of deaf-friendly alerting devices available including timers, baby monitors, smoke / carbon monoxide alarms and intruder alerts.
- Book a 'Safe & Well' visit with your local sensory support team.

Communicating by phone and messaging

Landlines can be adapted with amplified handsets or sound notification lights. Smartphones have accessibility settings for flashing notifications, vibration patterns, or adjusting sound clarity.

You can also connect your phone to your hearing aids via Bluetooth® or a streamer.

Smart phones often have settings which can transcribe incoming calls or radio and pre-recorded podcasts. Check what your mobile can do for you.



“

“With technology, everything you dream of exists, but you don’t need everything! Find what works for you”

– Emmanuelle, Peer Support Volunteer

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Home entertainment – TV, music, radio:

- Ask your audiologist about audio settings on your hearing aids, there are all sorts of ways you can adjust them to improve performance.
- Use hearing aid compatible headphones, soundbars, speakers, home hearing loop systems, and personal listeners to improve your experience.
- Streamers can send TV/radio sound directly to hearing aids/headphones.
- Small changes in your TV's settings such as adjusting treble and bass and adding captions can make it easier to follow dialogue.
- You can also link your TV to a remote speaker near to you to enhance sound.

Socialising:

- In groups or noisy places, adjust your hearing aid settings to better pick up conversation. Most aids have settings like 'forward focus' or 'noise reduction' to improve performance.
- Table mics, mini mics, and personal listeners can send speech directly to hearing aids.
- There are a range of smartphone captioning apps available – find one that works for you.

Communication app

The **Relay UK service** is available to help people to communicate over the phone. You type your message, a Relay assistant reads it to the other person and then types their reply back to you. You can use it via the Relay UK app.

In case of emergency

Remember! For emergencies, you can register your mobile phone with the emergency SMS service by texting "register" to 999. After registration, you can text 999 to connect with police, ambulance, fire, or coastguard. **You must register in advance to use it.**

BSL users can use [999bsl.co.uk](https://www.999bsl.co.uk) or the 999bsl app. TapSOS is a smartphone app that enables communication with the Emergency Services in a non-verbal way.

Sensory support services – Local authorities offer a range of services (including 'Safe and Well' visits, hearing aid batteries, assistive listening devices, and general advice) to support people with hearing loss. The services offered depend on location. Find out what is available from your local authority at – [gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services](https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services)

Useful links

Head to hearingdogs.org.uk/usefulorgs for information about where to find assistive devices and support options.

Learn more about apps that can support you – hearingdogs.org.uk/apps

To find out more about the Relay UK service visit – hearingdogs.org.uk/relayuk



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5. Looking ahead: support, solutions and staying positive

Hearing loss can affect home life. It can cause disruption, and it might change how confident you feel in your home. We know that peace of mind can be impacted, and it can lead to challenging times. But there are solutions and strategies to help you cope better regardless of the type of household you live in.



Top tips from our Peer Support Volunteers:

“
It’s OK to ask for help: you deserve it and it’s available.”

“
Think about your needs and a solution of some kind can be found.”

“
One size does not fit all: find out what works for you and your life.”

“

**Keep talking: keep sharing:
keep telling friends and
family what you need.**

”

“

**Remember it's like stepping
stones, slippery at times but
just keep moving forward.**

”

Remember to try to:

- Stay connected – consider the ‘how’ – how can you more easily stay connected?
- Stay motivated – remember the ‘why’ – the more effort you put in to managing your hearing the more you will get out.
- Stay engaged – plan the ‘where’ – think of the planning and communication tips covered
- Stay positive – reflect on your progress and what worked or didn't, constructive thinking is the way forward.
- Stay receptive – remain open-minded and don't be afraid to try new solutions.

Useful links

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To find other services that could support you visit hearingdogs.org.uk/support

Hear Me Out! aims to help hearing people understand more about hearing loss – you can find blogs, podcasts and a huge range of information on their website – hear-me-outcc.com

Read the blogs of Carly Sygrove about her experience of sudden sensorineural hearing loss and how it affected her life – myhearinglossstory.com