



**Helpful Hour:**  
Out and about with hearing loss



**Hearing Dogs  
for Deaf People**

Hearing Link Services

## 4. What helps? – Finding tools that work for you

There are a wide range of techniques, tools and technology that can help you when you are out and about. What works best will depend on you, your preferences and what you need in your day-to-day life.

As a starting point, we suggest you:

- Think about what you want to achieve.
- Think about any challenges you might face.
- Look for solutions that could make things easier.

People use different tools in different ways. For example, you might prefer to:

- Ask someone for support.
- Choose quieter times or less busy places.
- Use technology to plan and make arrangements.
- Try speech-to-text apps on your phone.
- Make the most of hearing devices that connect to hearing loops or personal listening systems.

What matters most is thinking about your own preferences and choosing solutions that work for you.



### 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.

### Speech-to-text apps

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

## Assistive devices

- In noisy settings or public venues, adjust your hearing aid settings to better pick up the sounds you want to focus on. Most aids have settings like 'forward focus' and 'noise reduction' which can help.
- Use hearing aid compatible loop systems in larger venues to stream sound directly to your device.
- In smaller spaces, table mics, mini mics and personal listeners can send speech directly to hearing aids.
- There are a range of smartphone captioning apps – find one that works for you.

## The benefits of going online

While we strongly encourage getting out and about, sometimes online options can make life a little easier. If you are comfortable online the following activities have digital options, often with added benefits.

- **Shopping** – browse and buy without needing to communicate.
- **Travel bookings** – plan your journey and book tickets at a time and pace that suits you, then register with transport providers to receive reminders and live service updates.

- **Online classes** – many classes including lipreading, fitness and language classes can be done online, with the option to turn on captions for extra support.
- **Appointments** – many organisations offer online appointments which reduces background noise and gives the option of live captions on your screen.

## PAUSE – a simple way to regroup if things feel difficult

You have done your planning, research and plenty of preparation and then something might go a bit wonky. Maybe something happens outside of your plan. That's OK.

Here's a little technique that might help if that happens:

- P** – **Pause** – Stop and take a breath.
- A** – **Assess your plan** – What had you hoped would happen?
- U** – **Understand what's happening now** – Reflect on what is actually happening.
- S** – **Self-kindness** – Don't let negative feelings take hold.
- E** – **Explore options** – Adjust, restart, or switch to Plan B.



## Useful links

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

**Assistive technology:** [hearingdogs.org.uk/apps](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/apps)

**Access card:** [accesscard.online/apply-or-renew/](https://accesscard.online/apply-or-renew/)

**National Rail – accessibility:** [nationalrail.co.uk/on-the-train](https://nationalrail.co.uk/on-the-train)

**National Rail – passenger assist:**

[nationalrail.co.uk/help-and-assistance/passenger-assist/](https://nationalrail.co.uk/help-and-assistance/passenger-assist/)

**Discounted public transport:**

[hearingdogs.org.uk/rnid-discounts](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/rnid-discounts)

**Online courses for deaf learners:** [citylit.ac.uk/deaf/online](https://citylit.ac.uk/deaf/online)

**Find out more about hearing dogs:**

[hearingdogs.org.uk/support/hearingdogs](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/support/hearingdogs)