



Helpful Hour:  
Out and about with hearing loss



**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People

Hearing Link Services

## 1. Understanding the challenges

Everyone's life is unique and hearing loss affects people in many different ways. Whatever your situation, finding solutions that work for you and help you to manage better is essential.



### What makes going out with hearing loss difficult?

Whatever your personal story, adapting to hearing loss and changes in your hearing can make going out feel trickier than it used to be. You might have tried and had mixed success, or found that your confidence has taken a knock. You may find it tiring or need to manage other challenges such as tinnitus or balance issues.

With this in mind, thinking about the benefits of going out can help you prepare for challenges.

“

“Being out and about has a positive effect on wellbeing and reduces isolation so it's important to persevere even though it may seem daunting. It will get easier as you become more accustomed to the challenges and know there are solutions.”

– Sylvia, Peer Support Volunteer



”

If you are not sure where to start, try this:

1. Make a list of activities you enjoy or would like to try – maybe you used to take part in something and have stopped, maybe you fancy trying something new. Jot them down as a starting point.
2. Prioritise those that you think could be achievable – you might not be able to do some things in the same way you used to but maybe there is a suitable compromise? Maybe things have changed since you last tried and now what used to be impossible might be possible?
3. Dive in and find out more. Use the 'Out and about with hearing loss' information sheets to guide you as you take steps forwards.



## Useful links

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

Tips for everyday wellbeing: [mind.org.uk/tips](https://mind.org.uk/tips)

Mental health benefits of physical activity: [nhs.uk/wellbeing](https://nhs.uk/wellbeing)

Blog and book about living with sudden hearing loss, balance disorders and tinnitus: [myhearinglossstory.com](https://myhearinglossstory.com)



Helpful Hour:  
Out and about with hearing loss



**Hearing Dogs  
for Deaf People**

Hearing Link Services

## 2. Having your say – explaining your needs

### Advocating for yourself

From time to time, you might need to advocate for yourself: to explain your rights, needs, and preferences. It can sometimes feel uncomfortable but remember, only you know what you need to make going out a little easier.

### Know your rights

The Equality Act 2010 is designed to make everyday life fairer and more accessible for everyone.

Places that are open to the public must not put disabled people at a disadvantage and must make reasonable changes to include them.

This applies to:

- Shops
- Cafés, pubs and clubs
- Venues and attractions
- Events
- Gyms, cinemas and theatres
- Banks, GP surgeries and public services

Put simply, the Equality Act 2010 is designed to make sure that everyone has the same right to take part in everyday life, and that organisations take reasonable steps to support this fairly.

If you have a trained assistance dog, like a hearing dog, remember that they also have full access rights.



### Remember

You have the right to let others know what would help you take part and feel included.

## Explain your needs

It may seem obvious but explaining what you can and cannot hear is a great first step to living better with hearing loss. Our Helpful Hour – Your homelife, your hearing – shares tips on how to explain the impact of your hearing loss to other people.

[Click this link](#) to find out more about the session.

## Make your hearing loss more visible

Hearing loss is often invisible – people may not notice you have it, or they might forget after you have mentioned it. Wearing a badge or lanyard that shows your hearing level can help others understand.



“

“When I first visited my hairdresser, I explained that I would have to take my hearing aids out in the appointment and then would not be able to hear. I asked them to look in the mirror when they talk so I can see them speaking. It’s a small change that makes a big difference. My hairdresser might not have known unless I had explained it.”

– Sue, Peer Support Volunteer



”

## Useful links

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

**Lanyards, badges:** [shop.hearingdogs.org.uk/collections/awareness-products](https://shop.hearingdogs.org.uk/collections/awareness-products)

**Your rights under the Equality Act 2010:**  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/equalityact](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/equalityact)

**Building self advocacy skills:**  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/ndcs-confidence](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/ndcs-confidence)

**Your homelife, your hearing webinar:**  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/webinars/homelife](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/webinars/homelife)

**Examples of self advocacy:**  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/rnid-anxiety](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/rnid-anxiety)  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/phonak-advocacy](https://hearingdogs.org.uk/phonak-advocacy)



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



**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People

Hearing Link Services

## 3. Planning ahead – setting yourself up for success

*“If You Fail to Plan, You Are Planning to Fail”* – Benjamin Franklin

That might be extreme, but you get the point! If you want to give yourself the very best chance of success when you are heading out to take part in an activity or event, then planning is the key.

### Step 1 – End goal

Before you start making plans, think about your end goal. What are you trying to achieve, and why is it important to you? Keeping this in mind can help you refocus if things don't go as expected or start to feel like a lot of effort.

### Step 2 – List the steps

Think about all the steps you need to take to make it happen. Maybe you need to use public transport, book tickets or find out about accessibility options? There might be support available that could help you. Make a list of all the things you need to consider.

### Step 3 – Research

Grab your list of steps and see what you can find out. Use these suggestions to guide your research.



#### Venue research

- If it is seated is there a seating area that would work better for you?
- Is there a time that would work better? Maybe a quieter period.
- Do they have accessibility options available? Maybe a loop, captions, BSL interpreter.
- What else might you need to research?

#### Travel research

- Think about what transport you need to use.
- Familiarise yourself with the route.
- Use the transport tools mentioned in the 'What helps' information sheet in this set.
- Allow extra time for your travel to avoid any unnecessary stress.
- Consider a Plan B in case something unexpected happens:
  - Is there another route you could take?
  - Is there another time you could travel?
  - Is there someone you can contact if you have difficulties?
  - What else could you do if you need to alter your plan?

If you can't find all the answers you need online, think about contacting the venue or transport provider directly. Explain what you need. If you let them know what might help you, they will be better placed to offer solutions.



“

“Going out with hearing loss is achievable, enjoyable if you prepare. Only you have the answer to what works for you.”

– Sue, Peer Support Volunteer

”

## Manage your energy levels

Living with hearing loss can be tiring. Adding a trip, class, or event can make it even more so. Consider the following:

- The first few times might be tiring but it gets easier as you gain more experience.
- Think about your whole journey, not just the activity. Travelling there, taking part, and getting home all use energy.
- Plan ahead where you can and be kind to yourself about what feels manageable.
- It may help to pace yourself and avoid planning several big activities close together.

## Useful links

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

### Research tools

Venue accessibility info: [AccessAble.co.uk](https://www.accessable.co.uk)

### Transport

[tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey/](https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey/)

[thetrainline.com/journey-planner](https://thetrainline.com/journey-planner)

[nationalrail.co.uk/journey-planner/](https://nationalrail.co.uk/journey-planner/)

### Cinema

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

Cinema card: [ceacard.co.uk](https://ceacard.co.uk)

Captioned film listings: [yourlocalcinema.com/](https://yourlocalcinema.com/)

### Theatre

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

[nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/access](https://nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/access)

[officiallondontheatre.com/access/](https://officiallondontheatre.com/access/)

[delfontmackintosh.co.uk/accessibility](https://delfontmackintosh.co.uk/accessibility)

[accessscottishtheatre.com/](https://accessscottishtheatre.com/)



**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)



Helpful Hour:  
Out and about with hearing loss



**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People

Hearing Link Services

## 5. Your next steps – giving it a go



### Be proactive

Taking an active role in finding what works for you can make a real difference. You know your needs best, and you are the expert in what helps and what does not. Being proactive doesn't have to mean big things, it can be as simple as trying one thing differently and seeing how it goes.

### Focus on what helps

Try to focus on what supports you, rather than what feels difficult. That might mean being upfront about your hearing loss, trying different

ways of communicating, or using technology and tools that make things easier. If one approach doesn't work, that doesn't mean you've failed, it just means you've learned something and can try another way.

### Take it step by step

Confidence rarely comes all at once. It builds through experimenting and experience. Small steps really do count, whether that's going to a new place, staying a little longer than last time, or trying a new activity. Setbacks will happen, and that's normal. It's part of moving forward.

## You are not alone

Many people with hearing loss face similar challenges. Connecting with others in similar circumstances – through groups, clubs, or shared experiences – can really help.

## Give yourself credit

Trying new things and facing challenges takes courage. Enjoying going out, discovering new things, and gaining confidence in everyday activities happens over time. Give yourself a pat on the back for being out there, and for not giving up. You are probably doing better than you realise.



“

“With the right support, approach and tools, it is possible to enjoy doing the things that matter to you in your own way, and at your own pace”

– Helen, Peer Support Volunteer

”

## Useful links

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

Lipreading classes: [atlalipreading.org.uk](http://atlalipreading.org.uk)

In-person courses for deaf learners:  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/citylit-inperson](http://hearingdogs.org.uk/citylit-inperson)

Learn more about living well with hearing loss:  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/at-home/](http://hearingdogs.org.uk/at-home/)

To find other services that could support you visit:  
[hearingdogs.org.uk/support](http://hearingdogs.org.uk/support)

If you have questions about hearing loss or would like some support please email our team at  
[helpdesk@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@hearingdogs.org.uk)