



Making life EASIER

**if you are deaf or hard
of hearing**



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

Making life EASIER

if you are deaf or hard of hearing

This booklet provides information about organisations and services that can provide help and support if you are deaf or hard of hearing. It includes details of the services provided by Hampshire County Council Sensory Services.



If you want this information in another format, for example, in Braille, in large print, or in another language, please contact Adult Services on **0845 603 5638** (voice) or **0845 603 5625** (textphone).



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WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

Hearing loss can affect people of all ages – children and adults. If you are worried about your hearing the first thing to do is see your own doctor.



Your doctor

There are many medical conditions that can cause hearing loss. With some conditions, even quite simple treatment can make you feel better; for example, if your hearing loss is caused by a blockage or an infection. If your doctor thinks it is necessary, you will be referred to a specialist for a more detailed examination.

You may be referred to your local hospital to see an ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultant or your doctor may send you to the audiology department for tests, help and advice. Both these services are based in hospitals, but some may also hold clinics in health centres. The specialist you see will give you advice on what to do next.

It is a good idea to ask your doctor or hospital consultant if there is a hearing therapist in your area. Hearing therapists are specially trained to give you advice about living with hearing loss and can help you to make as much use of your remaining hearing as possible.

Hearing aids

If your doctor thinks that a hearing aid would help you, you will be referred to a hospital audiology department where you can be tested and fitted with a hearing aid free of charge under the NHS. The servicing of your hearing aid and replacement batteries are also free.

As with all health services, you are free to buy a hearing aid privately and there are a number of companies that provide testing and advice. Remember, if you buy a hearing aid from a private company, you cannot get any help from the NHS with the cost of buying or servicing it, or with replacing the batteries.

If you buy privately make sure you are buying from a registered hearing aid dispenser.

Before you buy, it's a good idea to make sure you can have the hearing aid on a trial basis and return it if it is not right for you. Hearing Concern and the RNID publish leaflets that you might find helpful – see page 9 for their contact details.

There are some hearing aid clinics across the county – contact your local audiology department to find out if there is one near you.

Hampshire County Council Sensory Services

Whatever the outcome of your visits to the doctor or to the hospital clinic, you may feel that you want some further support.

Hampshire County Council Sensory Services Teams can help with many things. They can offer information and advice if you are:

- deaf (sign language user and non signer), deafened or hard of hearing
- worried about your hearing
- caring for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Assessment from a Sensory Services Officer

You may request an assessment from one of our Sensory Officers for hearing loss, this can take place in your home or at a clinic. Contact Adult Services on 0845 603 5630.

You will be asked to provide some basic details and then you may be sent a Personal Assessment form to complete. This will give us some background information to help prioritise your needs. If you wish, we will arrange for you to have an assessment with a member of staff who works only with deaf and hard of hearing people. This assessment will help us to decide whether you qualify for practical help from us.

An assessment is a discussion or several discussions between you and a Sensory Officer to decide what help you need and how it may be provided. You can explain what difficulties you are having and why you need help.

We can demonstrate equipment and tell you where it may be obtained. We can also suggest possible solutions to any specific problems you may be having.

One outcome of an assessment may be that we can supply some items on loan dependent on whether you meet the Fair Access to Care criteria.

Deaf Sign Language users

Hampshire County Council has a specific Deaf Services team who provide information, advice and services specifically for Deaf sign language users in Hampshire.

The team can make a full assessment of your needs in sign language and can arrange services to support you.

The team are happy to provide information and practical advice. They cannot provide or manage interpreters but can give you contact details.

All the members of the team have good British Sign Language skills.



Deaf Services Team

Capital House, 48-52 Andover Road,
Winchester SO23 7BX
Telephone/textphone 01962 846601
Fax 01962 814607
sms texting 07797 877012
email deaf.services.team@hants.gov.uk

WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

Hampshire County Council Sensory Services

Registering as deaf or hard of hearing

If you have a professionally diagnosed hearing loss, you can register as deaf or hard of hearing with Hampshire County Council. Registering may entitle you to some concessions from other organisations – for example, reduced travel costs on buses and trains. Your registration card is often useful to prove that you are deaf or hard of hearing.

If you register it also means that we can get a better idea of how many people are affected by hearing loss. We won't give your name to anyone, but we will start to plan more effective services for you and others.

It may be that while you are registering, you can discuss any other concerns you may have about your deafness, and we can advise you what to do at that stage.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing and want to register you should contact Adult Services on 0845 603 5630 (voice), 0845 603 5625 (textphone).

Support for deaf parents and carers

Many parents worry about things like not being able to hear their child crying, but there is equipment that can help you, and we can give you information about this.

Similar worries can affect deaf people caring for friends or relatives, and it is important to remember that we can offer you support even if you have only just become a carer.

Remember that if you are a carer, you are entitled to your own assessment from us to see if there are ways in which we can help you. Contact Adult Services 0845 603 5630 (voice), 0845 603 5625 (textphone).

Contacting Sensory Services

You can contact your nearest Sensory Services Team by telephone, textphone, email, fax or by calling in person. If the person you speak to cannot answer your questions fully, they will pass your details on to a specialist worker. Out of normal office hours and at weekends, you should call Adult Services on 0845 603 5630 (voice) 0845 603 5625 (textphone) or visit our web pages at www.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/disability/hearing-loss.

Alton

Park House, High Street, Alton GU34 1EN
Email north.east.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Basingstoke

Sun Alliance House, 37-41 Wote Street,
Basingstoke, RG21 7LU
Email north.east.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Gosport

133 Stoke Road, Gosport PO12 1SD
Email south.east.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Havant

Town End House, PO Box 61, East Street, Havant
PO9 1UB
Email south.east.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Hythe

West Shore House, West Street, Hythe,
Southampton SO45 6AA
Email west.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Romsey

Former Magistrates Court, Church Street, Romsey
SO51 8AQ
Email west.sensory@hants.gov.uk

Winchester

Capital House, 48-52 Andover Road, Winchester
SO23 7BX
Email west.sensory@hants.gov.uk



Employment

The Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at your local Jobcentre Plus can give you advice about how to cope with any effects your hearing loss may have on you at work. You will find the contact details of your nearest Jobcentre Plus listed in the Phone Book.



If you have recently lost, or are losing your hearing, you should tell your employer, who can then make any arrangements necessary to support you in the workplace.

If you have any problems at work because of your hearing loss, the DEA

will also be able to give you information about your rights and about the law with regard to discrimination.

If you are looking for work, you may be able to benefit from the government Access to Work scheme www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople/index.html, and your DEA can tell you about this and other support.

Benefits

If you are affected by hearing loss, you may be entitled to claim Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. If you are of working age (up to 60) please contact Jobcentre Plus. If you are over 60, please contact the Pensions Service.

You can also contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who will be able to give you advice. They can help you to complete the application forms for benefits. You can find your local CAB by looking in the Yellow Pages.

Other organisations and support

There are many local and national organisations that offer a wide range of services, support and information and social activities/events. Different organisations can, for example, provide interpreting services, or demonstrations of useful equipment.

Please find them listed on page 9.

The Internet

Many organisations have websites where you can see items of equipment, have your questions answered and get general advice. A good place to start is the Hampshire County Council website at www.hants.gov.uk, where you will find links to useful websites and details of what many organisations can offer.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

Libraries

Libraries are excellent places to go for information. All public libraries now offer internet access through The People's Network of free public access computers.

People with internet access at home can search the library catalogue and request books online, which is useful if you are worried about communicating effectively within the library. A 24-hour a day enquiry service on the website is now available at www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/enquire/index.html

All libraries have induction loop systems and can lend DVDs which have subtitles that can be switched on or off.



Police Link Officers for Deaf People (PLOD)

Set up in 1999, the Hampshire Constabulary PLOD scheme aims to promote equality of access to the Police for Deaf, Deafblind, deafened and hard of hearing people in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Link Officers are available with sign language, lipspeaking and Deafblind manual skills to communicate with people, to give information and advice, and to provide a link to other police departments.

Link officer details and further information can be found at www.hampshire.police.uk/PLOD.htm or by emailing deaf.link@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

Or by post to:

Police Link Officers for Deaf People
Community Safety Department
Police Headquarters, West Hill, Romsey Road
Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5DB

For evidential matters, such as statements and interviews, qualified interpreters will be used – you do not need to pay for this.

Non Emergency minicom/text 01962 875000
Non Emergency fax 01962 874201
Emergency SMS – Mobile Text Service 80999

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) offer a free home fire safety check (HFSC), working in partnership with the Sensory Services Teams in Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth. During a HFSC they give advice on home fire safety and discuss things like a fire escape plan. If you would like a HFSC please contact them direct on 023 8062 6809 or your local Sensory Services Team who will forward your request on to HFRS.

Local organisations

Hampshire Deaf Association [Sonus]

Spitfire House, 28-29 High Street, Southampton
SO14 2DF

Telephone/textphone 023 8022 0225

Fax 023 8021 3880

email enquiries@sonus.org.uk

web www.sonus.org.uk

24-hour interpreting service

Telephone 023 8021 3888

Fax 023 8021 3881

email r.holmes@sonus.org.uk

deafPLUS

67 Albert Road, Farnborough, Hampshire
GU14 6SL

Telephone/textphone 01252 510051

Fax 01252 524642

email south@deafplus.org

web www.deafplus.org



National organisations

British Deaf Association

Head Office, 10th Floor, Coventry Point,
Market Way, Coventry CV1 1EA

Telephone 02476 550936

Textphone 02476 550393

Fax 02476 221541

email bda@bda.org.uk

web www.bda.org.uk

Hearing Concern Link

27-28 the Waterfront, Eastbourne, East Sussex
BN23 5UZ

Telephone 0300 111 1113

Minicom 01323 739998

Fax 01323 471 260

email info@hearingconcernlink.org

web www.hearingconcernlink.org.uk

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton,
Princes Risborough,

Buckinghamshire HP27 9NS

Telephone/minicom 01844 348100

Fax 01844 348101

email info@hearingdogs.org.uk

web www.hearingdogs.org.uk

RNID

19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

Telephone 020 7296 8000

Textphone 020 7296 8001

Fax 020 7296 8199

web www.rnid.org.uk

Information Line (Free phone)

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

email informationline@mid.org.uk

COMMUNICATION – getting the message across

Conversations

If you are losing your hearing, one of the most difficult things to come to terms with is the fact that conversations you previously took for granted are now much harder.



You may find yourself saying 'pardon?' a lot, think that people are mumbling or find that you are missing bits of conversations when you are in a group. Even one-to-one, you may just get the wrong end of the stick, and this can be frustrating and embarrassing. If it happens in a public place, it can just add to the feeling of isolation that your hearing loss is giving you.

It is also important that your family and friends are aware of what can help or hinder communication with you. There is a useful factsheet available: suggestions for making communication easier when talking to someone who is deaf or hard of hearing. If you haven't already got this and would like a copy, please ask your local Sensory Services team.

Lipreading

Lipreading can be a very useful skill to develop if you have a hearing loss. It can help you to maintain contact and understanding with your friends and family and reduce the amount of times when you feel left out of things.

The best way to learn is for you and your family and friends to go to classes and there are many places that run these. Try one of your local Further Education Colleges (listed in the Yellow Pages under Schools and Colleges), or on the internet, or ask at your local office.

In a lipreading class you will meet people with similar experience in a friendly atmosphere which encourages mutual help.

Lipspeakers

If you have an occasion where you know it will be important for you to understand what is being said (such as a hospital appointment or a job interview), you might like to request that a lipspeaker be provided. Lipspeakers are specially trained to mouth clearly for the benefit of lipreaders, and, if you give enough notice, hospitals and potential employers should provide one.

You may also be able to find a lipspeaker yourself – voluntary organisations like the RNID can help with this (see page 9). You may have to pay for their services yourself though.



Sign Language

British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right with its own grammar and vocabulary. Your Further Education College is the best place to start looking for courses for you and your family/ friends.

If you are a BSL user you can arrange BSL interpreters through the RNID and Hampshire Deaf Association [Sonus] (see page 9 for contact details).

You can also contact TEAM Communications on 01256 467081 (voice), 01256 467087 (textphone), 01256 321452 (fax).



EQUIPMENT

Many of the things we use in our homes, such as doorbells, telephones, or alarms depend on sound to be effective. If you are deaf or hard of hearing there are some very good alternatives you can use that are based on things that you can see, or can feel vibrate.

This section describes in general terms some of the most commonly used equipment that is available.

You should always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using any piece of equipment and some products should only be installed by a qualified technician.

A list giving estimated costs of the pieces of equipment detailed in this section can be found on our website www.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/disability/hearing-loss/hearing-loss-equipment

Where can I get advice about equipment?

You can buy items straight away if you want, but you may like to ask Sensory Services Teams or a local voluntary organisation for some advice before you buy. There are also independent organisations that offer advice and working displays so that you can try things out before you decide.

How can I get equipment?

You can buy items yourself from specialist suppliers, or sometimes from high street shops. Contact details for some suppliers are given on page 17.

Hampshire County Council may be able to loan you some equipment once you have had an assessment and provided you meet the criteria – please see page 5 for details.

Mail order suppliers tend to sell a range of equipment and they all produce useful catalogues. It is advisable to check whether the company has a money-back guarantee if the equipment should be unsuitable.





The door

Getting the right doorbell

Many DIY stores have a selection of doorbells, buzzers and chimes working on display so that you can try them out in the shop. Doorbells come in a wide variety of tones, tunes and volume – the important thing is to find one that suits your hearing.

If, for example, you have a high frequency loss you may be able to hear a doorbell with lower tones.

Think about the best place to put the doorbell unit when you get it home. Many people put the bell in the hall but it may be better to put it where you spend most of your time, for example, in the lounge or the kitchen. An extension bell might be useful in another room or upstairs.

You can also get 'extra-loud' doorbells. These are very loud so you may have to think about your family or neighbours before installing one!

Portable bell units that you can carry from room to room are also available. Some incorporate a powerful flashing light.

Systems to let you know when someone is at the door or on the phone

A system can be installed* into the lighting circuit of your home so that when the doorbell or telephone rings all the lights in the house will

dim or flash. This may not be suitable if you have fluorescent lights, ceiling fans or an extractor fan (instead of a window) in the bathroom.

A specially designed table lamp can also be used. It works in a similar way by flashing in response to, for example, a door or telephone bell. Smaller lights – known as beacons – or additional table lamps can be used to extend the system to other rooms.

** Please note that this product will need to be installed by a qualified technician. There will be an additional cost for this.*

The phone

Hearing the phone ring

If you have difficulty hearing the telephone ring, you could try a loud extension bell or a different type of bell. Contact your telephone line supplier for information about the services they provide for people who have a hearing loss – some companies supply extension bells on free loan, with others there is a charge.

If you are unable to hear a bell, a phone flash unit can be connected to the telephone line – this will trigger a strobe light when the telephone rings.

EQUIPMENT

Talking on the phone

Telephones with speech volume/tone control are made by several manufacturers. If a telephone says it has an inductive coupler, this means it can be used with the T-switch of a hearing aid.

You can buy a portable telephone amplifier to attach to other phones you may need to use (such as a phone in someone else's house or in a callbox). These can be quite fiddly to fit and so may not suit everyone.

Mobile phones

There is equipment, such as neckloops, that can be used with some mobile phones – for more information, contact your mobile phone supplier or one of the specialist organisations. Mobile phones can also be used to send text messages.

Some mobile phones are not compatible with hearing aids and can cause interference. It is important that you try different mobile phones before buying one to find the most suitable one for you.

A textphone replaces sound with a small screen on which messages can be typed and received. Some models do incorporate a conventional voicephone. A textphone is mostly used to contact another textphone. At the moment a textphone user can only contact a voicephone using a relay service called TextDirect.

TextDirect (previously Type Talk)

If you have a textphone and want to call someone with a voicephone, you can use a relay service called TextDirect. An operator will read your typed message to the person you want to speak to and then type their reply for you to read on your screen. More information about the service is available from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (see page 9 for contact details).

Fax machines

An alternative to a voice or textphone is a fax machine. Most organisations and services – for example, doctors' surgeries and shops – can be contacted by fax.



Textphones

For people who need a visual telephone system a range of textphones is available. Most of these can be plugged directly into your existing phone socket, but some may also need an electric socket.

Email

You can email using a variety of different equipment – computers, special machines called emailers, mobile phones and now many digital television services also offer facilities to send and receive emails through your TV.

Neither fax nor email should be relied on for urgent or emergency use because you cannot be sure that someone has picked your message up as soon as it has arrived.

As technology develops, more and more equipment is becoming available with various combinations of fax, text and email facility. Be on the look-out for any new development that may help you.



The TV

Most of the equipment that can help you fully enjoy television programmes doesn't cut out the sound for other viewers. The volume on the television can be set to a suitable level for other family members and you can adjust the volume of your personal amplifier to a level that suits you.

Portable equipment

The RNID provides much information on hearing equipment on its website including details of personal hearing loop systems.

http://www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/factsheets/equipment/factsheets_leaflets/

Infra-red or radio wave systems are an alternative for people who are worried about trailing wires. A transmitter is connected to the television and you wear cordless lightweight headphones or a neckloop receiver.

Installed systems

'Loop' systems can only be used by people who wear a hearing aid with a 'T' switch or a loop pick-up unit. Loop systems give good sound quality and are easy to use. Switch your hearing aid to 'T' to hear the sound carried by the wire. However, this will usually cut out other sounds in the room.

A loop is installed by connecting an amplifier to the television and tacking a wire around the room. If you tend to watch TV from one chair, you may prefer to have a loop pad, which removes the need for wire to be tacked around the room. The disadvantage of loop systems is that they can pick up interference from other electrical sources or other people's loop systems.

Television subtitles

Many television sets now have teletext which can be used to display subtitles for some television programmes. Programmes that are subtitled are marked S or T in newspaper or magazine listings. Subtitles appear at the bottom of the screen and do not interfere with the sound or picture quality. You get the subtitles by pressing the text button on your remote control and then selecting page 888. Some cable, freeview and digital television channels offer subtitles which you can access in different ways and you should check that you know how to get subtitles with your provider. Subtitles are free.

In addition, some of the DVDs that you can rent or buy now have subtitles recorded on – check before you buy or rent.

EQUIPMENT

Alarm systems

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms save lives. If you are unable to hear your smoke alarm when you are asleep or not wearing your hearing aid, then you need to think about other ways of being alerted to it. There are systems which have a powerful strobe light or a vibrating pillow pad.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service has written a useful leaflet telling you where you should locate smoke alarms in your home, and you can get a copy from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service on 023 8062 6809.

Baby alarms

You can get equipment to let you know when your baby is crying. Many of these devices work in the same way as conventional baby alarms by transmitting sound but at the same time they also display a flashing light. Some also have an optional vibrating pad.

Person to person alarms

There are devices that are specifically designed to let the person you are caring for call you when they need assistance. They work by using a flashing light, buzzer or vibrating pad.

There are also motion pads that can be placed on the floor next to a bed or doorway so that when it is stepped upon it alerts the deaf/hard of hearing carer that the person is moving around/wandering. It is wired into the alerting equipment, usually a pager system.

Alarm clocks

There are mains and battery operated alarm clocks that can work with a light and/or a vibrating pad.

Battery operated alarm clocks are similar to travel clocks. They can be placed directly under your pillow.

There are also watches that have a vibrating alarm.

Pager systems

Pagers link the devices in your home (such as the doorbell, the telephone, the smoke alarm etc) into a single system, which alerts you when one of them is operating, and tell you which one it is.

The pager can be carried in your pocket, clipped to a belt, or worn in a pager pouch.



Organisations that may offer working displays of equipment

It is best to phone beforehand to discuss what you want and/or make an appointment.

deafPLUS

67 Albert Road, Farnborough, Hampshire
GU14 6SL
Telephone / textphone 01252 510 051
Fax 01252 524642
Email south@deafplus.org
web www.deafplus.org.uk

DOVE (Design Options for a Versatile Environment)

85 Northern Road, Cosham, Portsmouth
PO6 3EP
Telephone 023 9278 7788
Fax 023 9278 7788
email admin@d-o-v-e.org
web www.d-o-v-e.org

Hearing Concern Link

27-28 the Waterfront, Eastbourne, East Sussex
BN23 5UZ
Telephone 0300 111 1113
Minicom 01323 739998
Fax 01323 471 260
email info@hearingconcernlink.org
web www.hearingconcernlink.org.uk

Some manufacturers and suppliers of equipment

BioAcoustics Ltd

Mead House, Spring Place, Luton LU1 5DF
voice 01582 431000
textphone 01582 481411
fax 01582 488227
email helpdesk@bioacoustics.com
web www.bioacoustics.com

Clofield Limited

19 The Bridge Business Centre, Dunston Road,
Chesterfield S41 9FG
Telephone 0800 387 397
Textphone 01246 572141
fax 01246 450789
web www.silent-alert.co.uk

Connevans

Connevans Limited, Bridge House, 1 Nutfield
Road, Merstham, Surrey RH1 3EB
Telephone 01737 247571
Textphone/minicom 01737 644016
Fax 01737 223475
email info@connevans.com
web www.connevans.com

Deaf Awareness Technology

Deaf Awareness Technology
Fleetsbridge House, Fleets Corner
Poole, Dorset BH17 0HL
Telephone/fax 01202 682795
email sales@deaftech.force9.co.uk
web www.deaftech.force9.co.uk

Equipment for Equality

91 Sicily Park, Belfast BT10 0AP
Telephone 028 9043 1830
Fax 028 9043 1830

Gordon Morris Limited

Unit 21, Wessex Park, Somerton Business Park,
Somerton, Somerset TA11 6SB
Telephone/textphone 01458 272121
Fax 01458 274545
email online@gordonmorris.co.uk
web www.gordonmorris.co.uk

Hearing Products International Ltd (HPI)

Echo House, 26 Haigh Park, Haigh Avenue,
Stockport SK4 1QR
Telephone/textphone 0161 480 8003
Fax 0161 480 8006
email info@hear4you.com
web www.hear4you.com

Newtech Southern Ltd

Canada House, 1 Carrick Way, New Milton,
Hampshire BH25 6UD
Telephone/textphone 01425 620210
Fax 01425 638443
email sales@newtechsouthern.co.uk
web www.newtechsouthern.co.uk

Sarabec Ltd

15 High Force Road, Riverside Park,
Middlesbrough TS2 1RH
Telephone 01642 247789
Minicom 01642 244148
Fax 01642 230827
Email mail@sarabec.co.uk
web www.sarabec.co.uk

RNID

The RNID publishes a useful booklet about
equipment called RNID Solutions.

Contact:

RNID Products,

1 Haddonbrook Business Centre, Orton,
Southgate, Peterborough PE2 6YX
Telephone 01733 361199
Fax 01733 238020
Email solutions@rnid.org.uk
web www.rnid.org.uk/shop

Please note that this is only a small selection of
the many companies who supply equipment for
people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

No recommendation is implied by this list nor
responsibility accepted by Hampshire County
Council for any product or equipment that is
independently purchased.

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