

# Deaf and Hard of Hearing



## What is Deafness?

Deafness is the most common disability in the U.K, with 1 in 6 of the adult population having a hearing loss (RNID 2007).

Not everyone has the same experience of deafness.

People who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing may have difficulty in identifying certain speech patterns and frequencies of sound. Deafness ranges from a mild hearing loss resulting in missing conversation to a more profound loss whereby the individual would struggle with everyday communication. It is often assumed that wearing hearing aids can restore hearing, however, hearing aids will amplify all sounds not just voices or the sound the person wants to be able to hear.

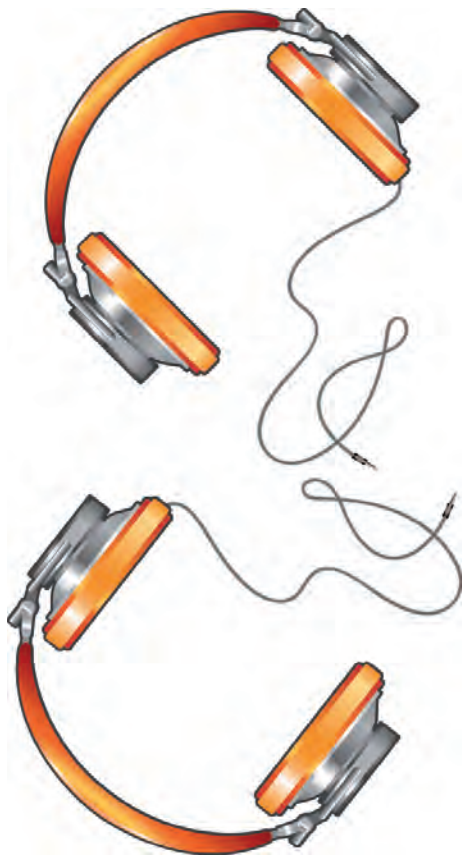
Individuals may have a hearing loss from birth whilst others may acquire this as an adult. Many deaf people feel the stigma of deafness and may be embarrassed to seek out advice and guidance. This may result in misunderstanding and missed information.

**Hearing loss should not be a barrier to the individual reaching their full potential. Support, services and equipment are available to support communication needs where appropriate**

## Impact on learning

A person with a hearing loss will use a variety of methods to communicate; written and spoken language, lip reading and British Sign Language (B.S.L.).

Different support strategies are required to support individual needs. If an individual becomes deaf, they may use the services of a manual or electronic notetaker.



Some deaf individuals choose not to use their voice, whilst others may have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly using speech.

Lip reading may require the services of a Lipspeaker. A Lipspeaker will silently repeat what is being said, using facial expression, clear lip pattern and fingerspelling letters to clarify speech, to give full access to the information being given.

For many deaf people, B.S.L. is their first and preferred language with English as their second language. B.S.L. has its own structure and does not follow the grammar rules of the English language. Access to information for a B.S.L. user would be through an Interpreter or a Communicator.

Loop systems are useful to many hearing aid users as they reduce background noise, allowing the individual to focus on the speaker. Alerting pager systems allow the individual more independence in everyday situations.

If an individual is referred to as Deafblind, they will have a loss of both hearing and vision. This loss will range from a mild loss of vision and/or hearing to a total loss of one or both senses. 23,000 people living in the U.K have been identified as Deafblind (RNID 2007).

An individual with a dual sensory loss will use a variety of methods to communicate; hearing aids, sign language, block and manual alphabet, specialist technology software and specialist equipment.

Assistance is available for individuals with a hearing loss / Deafblind ranging from B.S.L / English Interpreter, communication support worker, a sighted guide, health care services, specialist organisations, voluntary sector through to Government funded Access to Work. This range of services is available to the individual to support their communication needs and facilitate independence.

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## Support Offered

- Advice and guidance to staff prior to commencement of the educational or training programme
- Individual assessment to identify support requirements
- One to one support in the educational or training workplace
- Additional tutorial support from a qualified Teacher of the Deaf
- Note taking
- Modification of learning resources
- Support in examinations if appropriate