

Managing with Deafness and Hearing Loss



An information handbook for Deaf and
Hard of Hearing residents of West Berkshire



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Help and support for deaf and hard of hearing people in West Berkshire

This information can be produced in alternative formats if required. Please contact:

**West Berkshire Council Community Care
Sensory Needs Team**
Turnhams Green Park
Pincents Lane
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RG31 4UH

Telephone: 01635 503704

SMS only: 07917 013803

Email: Sensoryneeds@westberks.gov.uk

www.westberks.gov.uk

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call the Sensory Needs Team on Telephone 01635 503704.

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Section 1:

West Berkshire Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service

The Sensory Needs Service at West Berkshire Council is based within Adult Social Care. However we work with people of all ages, including children and young people, who have a significant sensory loss which impacts on their everyday lives.

Within our team we have trained specialist workers called Rehabilitation Officers for Deaf and Hard of Hearing who can give you advice, support, skills training and information relating to your deafness or hearing loss. We aim to enable you to live as independent a life as possible.

We can discuss with you your needs and can provide help with:

- Specialist equipment
- Tips, techniques and information on training for better or improved access to communication
- Advice on managing with tinnitus
- How to maintain and get the best use from your hearing aids
- Access to Social Work and advocacy support
- Information on and signposting to organisations and services who may be able to give additional support and help

If you would like to have a visit from one of our Rehabilitation Officers for Deaf and Hard of Hearing then please contact us for further information.

Sensory Needs Service

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Team
West Berkshire Council
Turnhams Green Park
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RG31 4UH

Telephone 01635 503704
Mobile **SMS only** 07917 013803
Email Sensoryneeds@westberks.gov.uk

Section 2:

Managing with deafness or hearing loss

CAUSES AND CONDITIONS

Hearing loss can result from a range of causes, the most common being age-related.

If the sound cannot get through the outer or middle ear it is called **conductive hearing loss**. Common causes of conductive loss are wax build up, glue ear (most common in children), ear infections, perforated eardrums and problems with the bones (ossicles) in the middle ear.

Where the problem is in the inner ear or the hearing nerve, it is called **sensorineural hearing loss**. Some conditions are permanent, others can be treated. Common causes of sensorineural loss are the natural ageing process (damage to the hair cells in the inner ear), exposure to loud noise, injury, side effects to some medications or hereditary.

TINNITUS

Tinnitus is the term used to describe noises heard in the head or ears when there is no external sound source. More information about Tinnitus and how to manage with the condition can be found in Section 7 of this booklet.

ISOLATION

Hearing loss can have a detrimental effect on your ability to communicate with others; unless effective communication strategies are learned and put in place this may lead to isolation and feelings of loneliness. Support from other people, either family and friends and/or specialist rehabilitation officers can help to reduce the risk of isolation.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication tactics are vital. For more information on the different methods of communication and some tips and techniques, go to Section 6 of this booklet.

SUPPORT AND YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

It is important to see your GP if you have any concerns about your hearing. Many people suffer with excessive wax build-up in their ears or ear infections. Both these problems can cause temporary hearing loss and can be treatable. If your doctor does not find any problems with your ears, then they can refer you to a Consultant Audiologist at the NHS Audiology clinic or Ear Nose & Throat clinic for a full hearing check and clinical diagnosis.

There are several charities which can offer you medical and emotional support, such as Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) and National Association of Deafened People. Many of these organisations also have on-line forums for people with hearing loss.

Support from your local community can be really helpful; peer support groups, such as Hard of Hearing Clubs can offer friendship and understanding about what you are experiencing as a hearing impaired person. It might help you to meet other people in a similar situation to talk about how your hearing loss affects your day to day living and to learn some different coping strategies.

AWARENESS

It is not always obvious that someone has a hearing loss; people often try to hide it due to fear of being stigmatised or not wanting to appear 'different'. Deaf awareness is very important so as not to exclude people with a hearing loss from society or from making their lives more difficult. A little understanding can make a huge difference.

There are Deaf Awareness courses that yourself or your family, friends or work colleagues may benefit from or learning basic communication tactics may help you to continue to take part in social events. These courses can give you useable tips to optimise your access. Speak to the Sensory Needs Team or search online for courses in your area.

REHABILITATION

The role of our rehabilitation officers is to provide specialist assessment and advice to people who are deaf or have a hearing loss. Our aim is to encourage independence, help people to regain or learn new skills and improve quality of life. There are many charities that can offer advice, support and everyday coping strategies.

UNDERSTANDING

Everyone copes with hearing loss differently; our rehabilitation officers understand this and will work with you as an individual to address your specific support needs.

EQUIPMENT

Assistive equipment can be useful for people with a hearing loss. There are many devices available to help you hear the television, when on the telephone and to hear environmental sounds in the home such as the doorbell, smoke alarms etc. Organisations such as Connevans have lots of information about the type of equipment available and some equipment may be available from your Sensory Needs Team or your local Social Services.

ACCESS

People with hearing loss can be excluded, or face barriers when accessing services. Simple solutions such as induction loops which work with hearing aids can be very helpful. Services should ensure their staff are 'deaf aware'. The Government's Access to Work scheme can support people with disabilities get into/remain in work by helping with the cost of specialist equipment or communication support.

EQUALITY ACT 2010

Everyone in Britain is protected by the Equality Act. Under the Equality Act you have a right to access goods and services and people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person who is disabled.

The Act requires disabled people to be treated equally and that reasonable adjustments be made if an individual's disability puts them at a disadvantage compared to someone without a disability. If reasonable adjustments are not made that is discrimination. Employers, service providers, public bodies, voluntary organisations and charities, amongst others, have legal responsibilities to protect individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Section 3:

Registration as Deaf or Hard of Hearing

There are three categories of registration which are set by the Department of Health.

These are:

- Deaf with Speech
- Deaf without Speech
- Hard of Hearing

Registration is entirely voluntary but highly recommended, it may help you access certain services and obtain certain benefits, either now or in the future.

To be eligible for registration with West Berkshire Council you must have been clinically diagnosed with a hearing loss or as deaf by a Consultant Audiologist (see Section 2). If you have already been diagnosed, we can contact your local Audiology Clinic, with your permission, and obtain a copy of your latest audiogram. Once we have this, we can determine which category to register you with.

Once you have agreed to be registered you will remain on our register for as long as you are living in West Berkshire. If you move out of West Berkshire to another Local Authority, then you should let us know and we will contact the Sensory Team in the area where you shall be living to advise them of your registration status and they can offer you registration for that area and continue to support you if you need it.

Proof of registration

Once we have your confirmation that you wish to be registered with West Berkshire Council then we will send you a yellow card which provides proof of your registration status within West Berkshire Council.

If you are eligible for registration with your deafness or hearing loss with West Berkshire Council, then showing your yellow Registration Card can help make your hearing loss clear to others.

Section 4:

Benefits and concessions of being registered as Deaf without Speech, Deaf with Speech or Hard of Hearing

There are a few benefits to becoming registered as either Deaf without Speech, Deaf with Speech or Hard of Hearing. Although there is no guarantee you will be eligible, registration can help with the following benefits amongst others:

Attendance Allowance: If you are over the age of 65 and require a lot of support as a result of your deafness or hearing loss and/or other disabilities then you could be eligible for this allowance. It is paid at two different rates and the amount you could get depends on the level of care you need. Other benefits you may be in receipt of can increase if you get Attendance Allowance.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP): If you are aged between 16 and state retirement age, have a long-term health condition or disability and difficulties with activities related to daily living and/or mobility then you could be eligible for this benefit. The rate of this benefit depends on how your condition affects you, not the condition itself. It is comprised of two components – daily living and mobility. You may get the mobility component of PIP if you need help going out or moving around. You'll need an assessment to work out the level of help you get and your rate will be regularly re-assessed. You will be assessed by an independent healthcare professional and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) makes a decision about the level of your claim based on this assessment, your application and any additional supporting evidence.

Disability Living allowance (DLA): DLA is now being replaced by PIP.

If you already receive DLA and were born **after** 8 April 1948 or are 16 years old or over then you will continue to get your DLA until the DWP write to you to advise you when this will end. This letter will then invite you to apply for PIP and tell you what to do next.

If you already receive DLA and were born **on or before** 8 April 1948 then this will continue, and you will not be entitled to claim for PIP.

New claims for DLA can only be made if you're under 16 years old.

For more information on Attendance Allowance, PIP or DLA then go to the DWP's website:
www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline

Or call the following numbers on Monday to Friday between 8am-6pm:

Attendance Allowance 0800 731 0122

DLA (if you were born on or before 8 April 1948) 0800 731 0122

DLA (if you were born after 8 April 1948) 0800 121 4600

PIP 0800 121 4433

Textphone, relay and BSL video relay services is also available, check the above link for further details.

Access to Work

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support if you have a disability to help you start working; stay in employment; move into self-employment or start a business (the grant is not for business start up costs). This grant does not have to be paid back and it does not affect your other benefits. There is no set amount for this grant, how much you get will depend on your individual circumstances. The grant can help towards things such as equipment adaptations; specialist equipment; fares to work if you can't use public transport; a support worker; disability awareness training for colleagues; communication support.

For more information contact Access to Work on:

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Telephone 0800 121 7479

Textphone 0800 121 7579

Monday to Friday from 8am-6pm

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

Students with a disability who are in higher education living in England can apply for a DSA. The support you get depends on your individual needs and not your income. This allowance is paid on top of any other student finance and can help towards the extra costs you may have because of your disability.

You can find more information on the Gov.uk website:

www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/

Travel Concessions

If you are registered as Deaf without Speech or Deaf with Speech or wear hearing aids then you are eligible to apply for a Disabled Person's Railcard for reductions on National Rail. This will give you a third off train travel. If you are travelling with another adult then they too will also be able to get a third of their fare.

For more information go to the Disabled Person's Railcard website:

www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/

Or contact them direct Monday to Sunday 7am-10pm:

Telephone 0345 605 0525

Textphone 0345 601 0132

Those who are profoundly or severely deaf or who have no speech could also be eligible for a free bus pass from West Berkshire Council.

Contact West Berkshire Council, Concessionary Fares Team on:

Telephone 01635 519394

Email transport@westberks.gov.uk

www.westberks.gov.uk/buspasses

VAT exemption on products

Registration does give VAT exemption on some specifically designed provides for deaf and hard of hearing people. Check with the independent equipment suppliers before purchase.

Agencies who can advise on benefits, concessions and employment issues:

West Berkshire Council for advice on Housing Benefit and Council Tax reductions:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/benefits>

Council Tax Team:

Telephone 01635 519520

Email counciltax@westberks.gov.uk

Benefits Team:

Telephone 01635 519258

Email benefits@westberks.gov.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau for advice on benefits and concessions:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/

Newbury Citizens Advice Branch

<https://citizensadvicewestberkshire.org.uk>

Telephone 0300 222 5941

Jobcentre Plus for advice on employment related issues and benefits:

www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Monday to Friday 8am-6pm

Telephone

Textphone

National Jobcentre Enquiry Line

0800 055 6688

0800 023 4888

BSL video relay service also available, go to the link above for more information

Benefit

Jobseeker's Allowance

0800 169 0310

0800 169 0314

Employment and Support Allowance

0800 055 6688

0800 328 1344

Universal Credit

0800 328 5644

0800 328 1344

Maternity Allowance

0800 169 0283

0800 169 0286

Bereavement Support Payment

0800 151 2012

0800 731 0464

Social Fund

0800 169 0140

0800 169 286

Income Support

0800 169 0310

0800 169 0314

(To report change in circumstance only, there are no new claims for Income Support)

Section 5:

Specialist equipment for deaf and hard of hearing people

Do you have difficulty hearing the doorbell, telephone or television? We may be able to provide equipment to improve the quality of your life and help you live more independently. Our rehabilitation officer will carry out an assessment of your needs at home. If we give you equipment after assessment, there is no charge. There is a range of specialist equipment available that may be provided by the Council or loaned to you on a trial basis. Specialist equipment includes:

- Smoke detectors that have a vibrating pad placed under the pillow at night. Landlords have a responsibility to provide smoke alarms for their tenants. We can talk to landlords on your behalf about specialist alarms.
- Baby alarms linked to a pager with a vibrating pad placed under the pillow at night.
- Loop systems and personal listening aids which work with your hearing aids to help you hear the television or radio.
- Flashing doorbells which have a range of sounds, different volumes and tones.
- Vibrating pager systems which have transmitters placed around the home to alert you to the doorbell, telephone, smoke alarm and baby.

If you are experiencing difficulties hearing the television or the telephone, there are things you can try at home yourself which may help:

- Try switching on the subtitles when watching television; this may help you follow what is being said more easily. Be aware that it may be more difficult to hear what is being said if there is a lot of background music/sound on the programme.
- When using the telephone try using the 'hands free' option (loudspeaker) as this is sometimes easier to hear for people who have a hearing loss. If your telephone is 'loop' compatible you can try switching your hearing aid to the loop programme when using it as this may help make conversation clearer. Try holding the handset in different positions near the ear instead of covering the ear to get the best sound possible.
- Amplified telephones can be purchased from a range of companies such as Connevens.

If you have hearing aids it is important to wear them, even when at home on your own as this enables your brain to adjust to hearing everyday sounds and will help you to hear environmental sounds around your home.

Section 6:

Communication

Good communication tactics are vital. Whatever your communication needs, whether it is lip-reading, sign language, note taking, equipment utilisation (such as a loop system) or something else unique to you, don't be afraid to let your needs be known.

Tips and techniques

- Be open and let others know that you have a hearing loss.
- Didn't catch what someone said? Ask them to repeat or say it again in a different way.
- If necessary, ask people to slow down and speak more clearly.
- Good lighting and positioning are important to enable you to lip-read.
- Optimise spaces, for example sit with your back to the wall or organise furniture into a C-shape or circle.
- Use personal listening devices.
- Basic resources, such as a pen and paper can be helpful to write things down.

Lip-reading

Lip-reading is a vital skill for many people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It's the ability to recognise the lip shapes, gestures and facial movements of a person when they are speaking to gain a better understanding of what they are saying. To become a good lip-reader requires skill and concentration as many words look similar on the lips, for example it's easy to mistake 'biscuits' for 'big kiss'!

Lip-reading classes are designed to give pupils the confidence and skills to tackle the isolation experienced from not being able to communicate effectively. A good lip-reading teacher will help you tell the difference between words and use context to fill in the gaps.

Sign Language

British Sign Language (BSL) is the visual language of Britain's Deaf Community. It is a language unrelated to English (or any of the UK's spoken languages) and is not a universal language. BSL is used across the UK, although there are differences in regional dialects. Despite the range of differences most signers have no problem communicating with each other.

There are many BSL classes available. You can start with basic introductory courses or a Level 1 qualification. See Section 9 of this handbook for more information.

Interpreters

There are many different communication services for deaf and hard of hearing people, such as BSL Interpreters or Lip-speakers, Speech to Text Operators, Palantypists, Deaf Relay, Deafblind Communicators.

Under the Equality Act service providers must ensure deaf people have access to their services. This means if you need communication support to access or attend any service, meeting or appointment, then the service provider must arrange and pay for an interpreter. Always ensure that they book a properly qualified and/or registered interpreter.

Section 7:

Managing with Tinnitus

What is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is a medical term to describe the perception of noise either in one ear, both ears or in the head, when there is no corresponding external sound.

Most people with tinnitus describe it as a 'ringing' sound, but the sounds can vary from person to person. You may hear it as buzzing; whistling; humming; whooshing or hissing.

Tinnitus is a common condition that can happen at any age (but is more common in people aged over 65). It can develop gradually or suddenly; can be continuous or come and go and can affect people in different ways.

There are two types of tinnitus:

1. Subjective tinnitus – this is the most common type, where the sounds are only heard by the person who has tinnitus. It is usually linked to problems affecting the hearing pathway.
2. Objective tinnitus – in a few rare cases, the tinnitus sounds can be heard by other people too, such as a doctor listening through a stethoscope placed near your ear. It is usually caused by a physical problem that produces sound, such as the narrowing of blood vessels in your ear.

What causes tinnitus?

Tinnitus is not a disease or an illness, it is a symptom generated within a person's own auditory pathways. Although it is often assumed that tinnitus occurs as a result of disease of the ears, this is often not the case. The precise cause of tinnitus is still not fully understood.

What can you do about it?

If you think you have tinnitus, go and see your GP. You may need to be referred to an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist or an Audio Vestibular Physician, who will take a full medical history and provide a thorough examination. Based on this, medical conditions related to tinnitus can be confirmed or ruled out, and thereby provide a basis for more specific tinnitus management.

Do not worry about your tinnitus, and do not try to do things to get rid of it, as this only becomes tinnitus related activity and could actually make tinnitus worse. Based on the medical investigations as indicated above, and information about how tinnitus is generated, the emotions related to the tinnitus perception can be changed. As the attitude to the tinnitus changes, the brain reverts to its usual activity of filtering out 'predictable' signals from the different sensory systems (hearing, smell, touch, vision etc.), thereby filtering out the tinnitus signal from your conscious mind. This is how we learn to live without our tinnitus.

What support is available?

There is a range of support available for tinnitus from medical intervention to alternative therapies. Many ENT and audiology departments now offer treatment for tinnitus based on the individual's needs. This may include medication (not specifically for tinnitus as there is no medication just for tinnitus), adjusting current medication or an explanation of the cause of your tinnitus. Some people may benefit from counselling, relaxation therapy, stress management and advice on the use of hearing aids, white noise generators and environmental sound enrichment.

Alternative therapies

Many people find their tinnitus worsens when they are anxious, stressed or tired. Learning to relax is probably one of the most useful things you can do to help yourself. Those who practice relaxation say it reduces the loudness of their tinnitus and helps them become indifferent to their tinnitus. Methods of relaxation may include breathing techniques, yoga or meditation. Some people find having regular massages or other alternative therapies such as reflexology can help them with relaxation.

Environmental sound enrichment

Environmental sound enrichment is the adding of sounds to take the brain's focus away from the tinnitus. Although sound enrichment may benefit some people at any time during the day, it is at nighttime when most people have most difficulties. Consider introducing something simple such as a ticking clock or electric fan. There are also natural sound generators which can be bought; some have the addition of diffused coloured light also. These generators usually have several settings of different sounds such as birdsong, waves breaking or a babbling brook. Alternatively, download one of the many relaxation Apps onto your mobile. If you have hearing loss or are deaf and also have tinnitus maybe consider using lights projected onto the ceiling as a form of relaxation and re-focusing the mind.

For more information about tinnitus and support, visit your GP in the first instance.

The British Tinnitus Association is an excellent resource. They have lots of advice and information, run support groups, have a shop with many different sound enrichment products and ideas and have a useful on-line forum. They can be contacted on:

Helpline 0800 018 0527 Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm

General enquiries 0114 250 9933

SMS text 07537 416841

Email helpline@tinnitus.org.uk

www.tinnitus.org.uk

RNID also has some good support and information on tinnitus. Find out more or contact them:

Telephone 0808 808 0123

SMS text 07360 268988

Email contact@rnid.org.uk

www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/tinnitus

Section 8:

Hearing Aids: maintaining and getting best use

DIAGNOSIS AND GETTING HEARING AIDS

Early intervention is key. It is a good idea to approach your GP for advice or treatment at the first signs of hearing loss. If there are no health concerns causing your hearing loss, then your GP can refer you to your local NHS Audiology Clinic for an assessment.

At your audiology assessment you will be able to discuss any problems you are having with your hearing with a Consultant Audiologist. A hearing test will be carried out to find out the level of sounds that you can hear. The audiologist will then discuss the options available to you, including having hearing aids if appropriate.

An impression may be taken of your ear; this involves the audiologist inserting a foam plug then putting some putty in your ear to make an impression of the shape of your inner ear (this is completely painless). This process is for making an ear mould for use with your hearing aids, which is unique to the shape of your ear.

At your hearing aid fitting, your aids will be tuned to your hearing aid prescription. Your audiologist will discuss the hearing aid options with you; it is possible to have different hearing aid program options for different listening situations.

HOW HEARING AIDS WORK

A hearing aid makes sounds louder and clearer, however the results will vary from person-to-person dependant on the severity of hearing loss.

Digital hearing aids are available as standard on the NHS; a built-in microphone picks up sound which is processed electronically inside the hearing aid. A benefit of digital hearing aids is that the audiologist can fine tune your aids to suit your particular hearing loss.

Most hearing aids have the facility for a hearing loop setting (also known as the T-switch). However your audiologist may need to activate this before you can use it. If this was not done at your hearing aid fitting you can make an appointment to have this done.

Loop systems can help you hear better in certain situations such as banks, supermarkets and cinemas. Sound is sent from a specific audio source direct to your hearing aids. Loop systems can be installed in the home to enable you to hear your television and audio equipment. Some telephones have a built-in loop system that can help make phone conversations clearer.

GETTING USED TO HEARING AIDS

You will normally be offered a follow-up appointment several weeks after your hearing aid fitting. If you are finding the sound or the ear moulds uncomfortable your audiologist may need to make some adjustments. Many hearing aids can be programmed to allow you to switch between different settings, for example when listening to music or having a conversation in a noisy environment.

If you are struggling to adjust to your hearing aids it may help to slowly build up the time spent wearing them. Start by using them once or twice a day for an hour or two in a quiet environment. Listen to everyday noises such as the kettle boiling and the fridge humming. Try having conversations with another person in a quiet room; make sure they face you and have good lighting so that you can lip-read them too.

When comfortable with quieter sounds try wearing your hearing aids outside, building up to wearing them in noisier places – the sounds may seem very loud until you get used to them but this will become easier over time. In group conversations it will be difficult to hear everything that's being said but try to follow the conversation.

MAINTAINING YOUR HEARING AIDS

If you have NHS hearing aids, batteries are available free from audiology or most GP surgeries. You will need to take your battery issue card with you to be signed.

To clean the main part of your hearing aid, wipe it carefully with a soft, dry cloth. You must never put the hearing aid itself into water or get it wet.

To clean the earmoulds, wipe them with a soft dry cloth every night. Use the small brush with the hook on one end (provided by audiology) to remove any wax which has got into the channel that goes through the earmould. Once a week wash the earmoulds (you must check this with your audiologist first). To do this:

- Gently pull the soft tubing off the hooked part of the hearing aid.
- Wash the earmoulds only (with the tubing still in place) in warm, soapy water.
- Rinse well, then shake or blow down the tubing to remove any remaining water.
- Leave overnight to dry.
- Re-attach the earmould, via the tubing, to the hooked end of your hearing aid.

Tubing should be replaced about every 6 months to prevent it becoming brittle. This can be done at audiology drop-in repair clinics or you can ask your audiologist to give you instructions on how to do this yourself. Royal Berkshire Hospital's Audiology Department have some excellent information on their website about maintaining hearing aids.

www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/featured-services/audiology/audiology-adults/

LOCAL WEST BERKSHIRE AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Royal Berkshire Hospital Audiology Department

Telephone 0118 322 7238

Email Audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net

Hearing Aid Repair Service

This can be done by contacting the Repair Clinic direct

Email Audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net

Telephone 0118 322 7238

Alternatively, you can post your hearing aids to the Audiology Department at Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading RG1 5AN.

Volunteer Service

If you are unable to get to the hospital, the audiology department has trained volunteers who can visit you at home to re-tube your hearing aid and provide advice or support with your hearing aids. Contact audiology for more information about this service.

Section 9:

Useful addresses and contact details

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

British Deaf Association (BDA)

The BDA is a major campaigning charity supporting the Deaf community through promoting equality, access and freedom of choice to communication.

To find out more about their work go to their website: www.bda.org.uk
Or contact them on: Email bda@bda.org.uk

British Tinnitus Association (BTA)

The BTA have a massive resource of information; run support groups; and have an on-line forum. With a trained team of friendly and experienced advisers, for anyone who experiences tinnitus or those simply seeking guidance or information about the condition.

For more information go to their website: www.tinnitus.org.uk/
Or contact them on: Helpline 0800 018 0527 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm
SMS text 07537 416841
Email helpline@tinnitus.org.uk

deafPLUS

deafPLUS is a charity offering a wide range of services to deaf people or those with hearing loss to develop their potential and promote independence and wellbeing. They provide information and advice support on matters such as welfare benefits, housing, money and financial aid and employment. They also have an advocacy service.

To find out more go to their website: www.deafplus.org
Or contact them on: Telephone 0207 790 8478
Email info@deafplus.org

Deaf Unity

Empowering Deaf people by providing the right support at critical moments from youth to adulthood. Working to ensure Deaf people have equal and full access to information and opportunities; providing practical support and information; learning opportunities and targeted training; Deaf Unity address the barriers and disparities that Deaf people face.

To find out more got to their website: www.deafunity.org
Or contact them using their on-line form: www.deafunity.org/contact-us

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Hearing Dogs train dogs to alert deaf people to sounds that hearing people take for granted, such as the doorbell, alarm clock, smoke/fire alarms etc. A Hearing Dog can help bring independence and confidence to deaf people who otherwise might be finding their hearing loss or deafness causes isolation.

To find out more about their work go to their website: www.hearingdogs.org.uk

Or contact them on: Telephone 01844 348100
Text relay 18001 01844 348100
Email info@hearingdogs.org.uk

BSL contact available through InterpretersLive! service provided by Sign Solutions

To apply for a Hearing Dog use the following contact details:

Telephone 01844 348111
Text relay 18001 01844 348111
Email applications@hearingdogs.org.uk
www.hearingdogs.org.uk/apply

HearingLink

This charity helps people find information and support to connect with others who have similar experiences. They provide specialist support courses including an intensive rehabilitation programme for people who have become suddenly deafened and self-management courses for those with moderate hearing loss. They help form local groups, have a wide-ranging volunteer network and provide emotional and practical support.

For more information go to their website: www.hearinglink.org

Or contact them on: Helpdesk email helpdesk@hearinglink.org
General enquiries 01844 348111
Email enquiries@hearinglink.org

Deaf Muslim UK (DMUK)

The first national Deaf organisation to support Deaf Muslims in the development and learning of their faith and culture. DMUK has pioneered to make Islam accessible to the Deaf community in BSL. DMUK is open to all Deaf people regardless of faith and cultural backgrounds. Indoor and outdoor activities and projects include seminars, workshops, trips, Eid parties, translation and distribution of learning resources in BSL.

For more information go to their website: www.deafmuslim.org.uk

Or contact them using their on-line form: www.deafmuslim.org.uk/page/contact

National Association of Deafened People (NADP)

The main objective of NADP is to increase awareness of the specific needs and requirements of deafened people, to ensure they have full access to communication, information, employment and services.

For more information go to their website: www.nadp.org.uk

Or contact them on: Telephone 0845 0559663
SMS Only 07818 132 961
Email : Enquiries@nadp.org.uk

Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)

RAD works with Deaf people to promote equality for Deaf people, providing services in their first or preferred language, usually British Sign Language. They have a range of support from employment advisers to communication support to advocacy. They support children and young people providing information, advice and accessible and inclusive activities as well as support through the transitional stages of education.

For more information go to their website: www.royaldeaf.org.uk/

Or contact them on: Telephone 0300 688 2525
SMS text 07851 423866
Email info@royaldeaf.org.uk

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

RNID is one of the largest charities in the country working to support people with hearing loss, deafness and tinnitus. As well as providing day to day care for people who are Deaf and have additional needs they also supply communication services, campaign to change public policy and provide practical advice and support.

For more information go to their website: www.rnid.org.uk

Or contact their Helpline: Telephone 0808 808 0123
Email information@rnid.org.uk

SignHealth

SignHealth are working towards a future where there are no barriers to good health and wellbeing for Deaf people and providing easier access to healthcare and information. They have a range of projects, services and campaigns all for improving the health of Deaf people. Support includes psychological therapy, domestic abuse, advocacy and they have a 24 hour crisis text service. They have an excellent BSL Health Video Library making information accessible for Deaf people in their first or preferred language, BSL.

For more information on these projects go to their website: www.signhealth.org.uk

Or get in touch direct: Telephone 0203 947 2600
SMS text 07860 033214
Email info@signhealth.org.uk

Therapy Team:

Telephone 07966 976747
SMS text 07984 439473
Email therapy@signhealth.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Team:

SMS text 07800 003421
Email da@signhealth.org.uk

Crisis Text Line

If you are experiencing a crisis, text SHOUT to 85258 for free text messaging support.

For more information about this service go to their website: www.crisistextline.uk

Other resources and support

BSL AND TELEVISION

The BBC broadcasts two different types of TV programs with signing in British Sign Language – BSL sign-interpreted versions of mainstream BBC programs in the Sign Zone, and programs created specifically for sign-language users, such as See Hear, a magazine program for the Deaf Community.

See Hear

Airs on the first Wednesday of every month on BBC2 at 8 a.m.

On-line information, resources and links to BSL Zone and signed programmes.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006m9cb

Sign Zone

Popular TV programs are signed and broadcast on BBC1 late in the evenings. Details are given in general TV listings.

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/signed

BSL Zone

The British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust commissions TV programs made in BSL by Deaf people for Deaf people. Offering an alternative way for commercial broadcasters to meet their regulatory requirements to provide sign language on their qualifying channels. Programs are available to watch on the BSL Zone website.

www.bslzone.co.uk

CLUBS

Please note some Deaf clubs are for people whose primary form of communication is BSL and not for hearing people learning BSL who want to practice their skills

Reading Deaf Centre

131-133 Cardiff Road, Reading RG1 8JF

Telephone 0118 959 4969

SMS text 07704 687298

Email info@readingdeafcentre.co.uk

www.readingdeafcentre.co.uk

Reading Hard of Hearing Club

Telephone 01428 751343

Mobile 07583 683836

Email david.34murray@btinternet.com

www.hearinglink.org/connect/groups-clubs-people-hearing-loss/reading-hard-of-hearing-club/

BADHOGS (Bracknell Area Deaf & Hard of Hearing Support Group)

Telephone 07947 675959

Email badhogsbracknell@gmail.com

Basingstoke Deaf Club

Email erjma@btinternet.com

Email chemda1948@aol.com

Basingstoke Hard of Hearing Club

Email ycjohn14@hotmail.com

Deaf Watermill Club

Various clubs and events held at the Watermill Theatre in Newbury including, Deaf Community Chat and Sign Language Corner.

www.watermill.org.uk/deaf_watermill_club

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

British Sign Language

British-Sign website is an on-line resource providing an introductory course to BSL and other useful resources including a BSL dictionary, fingerspelling game and sign of the day.

www.british-sign.co.uk

Signature is a national charity and awarding body for deaf communication qualifications, such as BSL levels 1 to 6. Many BSL classes can be accessed via live video links such as Zoom or Teams. Search on their website to find classes near you.

Telephone 0191 383 1155

SMS text 07974 121594

www.signature.org.uk

If you need an interpreter or need someone to book an interpreter for your meeting or appointment, search for qualified registered BSL interpreters via these two websites.

Association of Sign Language Interpreters www.asli.org.uk

National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind

People www.nrcpd.org.uk **

*** also listings for speech to text reporters, lipspeakers, Deafblind interpreters, SL translators and notetakers.*

Lipreading

Kay Murray teaches lipreading at Reading Hard of Hearing Club.

For more information contact Kay direct.

Telephone 01428 751343

Mobile 07583 683836

Email david.34murray@btinternet.com

Mary Hare School run lipreading classes at the Arlington Arts Centre.

For more information contact them direct.

Mobile 07423 710016

Email lipreading@maryhare.org.uk

Learn 10 basic lipreading techniques and get more information about lipreading on the Hearing Link website www.hearinglink.org/lipreading

Lipreading Practice is a website which has free lipreading exercises via video clips and written exercises to help you practice your lipreading skills.

www.lipreadingpractice.co.uk

DEAF BLOG

The Limping Chicken is the UK's independently run Deaf blog and website, focussing on everything related to deafness, publishing blogs by Deaf people across the UK and the world and laying eggs every week.

www.limpingchicken.com

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Connevans

www.deafequipment.co.uk

Telephone 01737 247571

Email askaquestion@connevans.com

Hearing Products International

www.hear4you.com

Telephone 0161 480 8003

Email info@hear4you.com

Sarabec

www.sarabec.com

Telephone 01642 247789

Email mail@sarabec.co.uk

FAITH

Christian

Deaf Church services held in the chapel at Reading Deaf Centre, first Sunday of the month at 10.30am. They join with local Deaf churches in Diocesan Deaf Church with services also at Oxford Deaf Club, Cox Green Maidenhead, Slough Deaf Club and Cross & Stable Milton Keynes.

www.readingdeafcentre.co.uk/deaf-church

Chairperson Ken Dyson

Email kendyson@talktalk.net

SMS text 07890 671257

Muslim

Deaf Muslim UK (DMUK) is the first national Deaf organisation to support Deaf Muslims in the development and learning of their faith and culture. DMUK has pioneered to make Islam accessible to the Deaf community in BSL. Indoor and outdoor activities and projects include seminars, workshops, trips, Eid parties, translation and distribution of learning resources in BSL.

www.deafmuslim.org.uk

SMS text 07412 650755

info@deafmuslim.org.uk

STAGE & SCREEN

Cinema

Many cinemas provide subtitled performances. Ask at your local cinema, or contact:

Telephone 0845 056 9824

Mobile/text 07931 341 377

Email subtitles@yourlocalcinema.com

www.yourlocalcinema.com

Theatre - Stagertext

Some theatre performances are subtitled.

Telephone 0207 377 0540

www.stagertext.org

The Watermill Theatre, Newbury

All BSL performances at The Watermill are sign integrated, this means the sign performer is onstage translating alongside the actors, delivering the signing from the heart of the action. Some productions also have closed captions. Headsets and loops also available.

Box office 01635 46044

Email boxoffice@watermill.org.uk

www.watermill.org.uk/bsl_performances

SPORT

Reading Deaf Football Club

Email hperry-lewis@hotmail.co.uk

Email cpeters@readingfc.co.uk

www.Englanddeaffootball.co.uk/team/reading-dfc

England Deaf Football www.Englanddeaffootball.co.uk/about-edf

UK Deaf Sport www.ukdeafsport.org.uk

TRAVEL

Limitless Travel

www.limitlesstravel.org/disabled-holidays/categories/deaf-people

Responsible Travel

www.responsibletravel.com/holidays/accessible/travel-guide/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing

Travel-Quest

www.travel-quest.co.uk

www.travel-quest.co.uk/tqdisability.htm#deaf

Section 11:

Children and Families

The Sensory Needs Team work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their families too.

As your child grows their needs and yours will change over time. We work closely with the child, parents, carers and other professionals involved in their care to tailor the support needs for the whole family.

Our aim is to try and ensure everyone has access to the best information, equipment and resources at all times. The earlier your child is known to our service, the sooner we can provide support, plus this has the added benefit of an easier transition into adulthood for the young person.

If you would like to have a chat with our team or want to refer a child to us (please gain permission from the parents/carers of the child or young person) then give us a call or send us an email today.

West Berkshire Council Community Care
Sensory Needs Team
Turnhams Green Park
Pincents Lane
Tilehurst
RG31 4UH

Telephone 01635 503704
SMS only 07917 013803
Email Sensoryneeds@westberks.gov.uk

www.westberks.gov.uk

The following section provides a range of information about the various services and resources available for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.

EDUCATION

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

The Sensory Consortium Service is a specialist education support service for hearing impairment, visual impairment and multi-sensory impairment. They support, extend and enhance the educational opportunities and achievements of children and young people from 0-19 years with a hearing and/or visual impairment from diagnosis to entry into the workplace. This is a joint arrangement between all Local Authorities in Berkshire.

- Providing a home-based education programme for pre-school children who have a diagnosed sensory impairment.
- Pre-School Group opportunities to meet families and children with sensory impairment.
- Specialist assessment, teaching and advice.
- Contributing to individualised educational programmes and liaising with Health, Local Authorities and other professionals.
- Delivering specialist training to mainstream and special school staff.
- Provision of specialist teacher support for planning provision and the placement and monitoring of pupils with sensory impairment.
- Keeping specialist equipment available for loan to schools.
- Running joint Community Audiology Clinics.
- Chatty Monkeys West Berkshire pre-school group is held alternate Tuesday mornings. Regular newsletters are sent out to parents as well as dates for the group and a programme of workshops. Call Jane Peters on 0118 937 5043 for more information.

Gail Ditchfield, Qualified Teacher of the Deaf: 07786 511851

Tim Kehoe, Teacher of the Multi-Sensory Impaired: 07543 303366

Jane Peters, Head of Service: 07887 540921

Telephone 01628 796786 (answer phone when office closed)

Email sensory.consortium@achievingforchildren.org.uk

www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk

Deaf Education Through Listening and Talking (DELTA)

DELTA is a national charity which supports and develops the Natural Aural Approach to the education of deaf children.

- Information on the Natural Aural Approach.
- Meetings for families who want to help their deaf children listen and talk.
- Summer Schools for the whole family to learn the skills and techniques they need.
- Informing local education authorities, doctors, health visitors, audiologists and other professionals who help deaf children about their approach and its achievements.

Telephone 0300 365 7200

Email enquiries@deafeducation.org.uk

www.deafeducation.org.uk/

ORGANISATIONS AND CHARITIES

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

The leading charity in the country providing a huge resource and support network for children with deafness, their families and professionals.

- Deaf young people: understanding your rights and what support is available including advice on mental health, independent living and applying for financial support.
- Parenting and family life: different topics and support on issues such as relationships, emotional health and wellbeing, parenting a deaf child and much more.
- Events: a range of events for children and parents including family sign language, on-line baby and toddler sessions, information and advice sessions and webinars.
- Technology and products: information, advice and resources on a range of specialist items for deaf children and young people in the home, community and education.
- Money and benefits: information about disability benefits, welfare benefits and grants.
- Information resources: a huge range of publications covering all matter of topics such as communication; education; benefits; understanding deafness.
- The Buzz: a website for deaf young people aged 8 to 18 in the UK <https://buzz.org.uk>
- National Helpline: support on a range of topics related to childhood deafness including technology, health, social care and discrimination.

Contact Monday to Thursday 9am-5pm; Friday 9am-12.30pm:

Telephone 0808 800 8880

SMS text 07860 022888

Live chat and free video call with a BSL interpreter also available

www.ndcs.org.uk

Berkshire Deaf Children's Society (BDCS)

A registered charity run by parents of deaf children. Their main aim is to give help and support to deaf and hearing impaired infants, children and their families.

- Providing opportunities for children to develop social networks.
- Creating opportunities for parents to share experiences and help support each other.
- Emotional and social support to families with deaf children.
- Giving deaf children the chance to meet outside of school.
- A range of events bringing children and their families together such as canoeing, horse riding, sno-tubing, private subtitled cinema trips, BSL signed events.
- Fundraising activities which supports parents of deaf children to come together in a fun and relaxed environment.
- Affiliated to the NDCS enabling BDCS to make use of their resources, information and experiences.

On-line contact form www.berkshiredcs.org/about/contact/
www.berkshiredcs.org/

Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)

RAD works to promote equality for Deaf people through the provision of accessible services. They also support children and young people.

RAD's Children and Young People services aim to develop important life skills, reduce social isolation, build confidence and support young deaf people to achieve their full potential through befriending, in-school programmes, careers advice, wellbeing support, advocacy and mentoring.

www.royaldeaf.org.uk/children-and-young-people/

Telephone 0300 688 2525

SMS text 07851 423866

Email info@royaldeaf.org.uk

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People train dogs to alert deaf people to sounds they would otherwise miss, for example sounds that many people take for granted like the doorbell, alarm clock and even danger signals like the fire alarm.

But did you know that hearing dogs can also be available for children as well as adults. If you think your deaf child could benefit from a hearing dog then contact their team for more information.

www.hearingdogs.org.uk/apply/hearing-dogs-for-children/

Telephone 01844 348111

NGT/Text relay 18001 01844 348111

Email applications@hearingdogs.org.uk

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

CODA UK & Ireland (Children of Deaf Adults)

CODA are the only national organisation representing solely Children of Deaf Adults. They were established in 2011 to facilitate social interaction of CODAs with their peers, provide peer support and celebrate their heritage. They offer a range of support services such as workshops, camps, information on mental health and a large online resource library.

Email info@codaukireland.com

www.codaukireland.co.uk/

Chloe's and Sophie's Special Ears Fund (CSSEF)

CCSEF is a charity covering the Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire areas. They aim to raise Deaf Awareness, enhance sound acoustics in school environments and provide resources and equipment to deaf children to support their emotional wellbeing. CCSEF can also provide access and funding to parents of deaf children to learn British Sign Language levels 1 and 2.

Telephone or SMS text 07935 056499

Email contact@cssef.org

www.cssef.org.uk

Deaf Parenting UK

A central resource for Deaf parents and professionals working with Deaf parents

- Deaf parenting skills: Trainers who are Deaf delivering courses for Deaf parents.
- Parenting support: 1-1 parenting skills support for Deaf parents.
- Befriender services: Working with parents by providing parenting advocacy support.

SMS text 07928 842 529

Fax 08712 643323

Email info@deafparent.org.uk

www.deafparent.org.uk

Little Hares

Little Hares is a Deaf baby and toddler support group, run by Mary Hare School in Newbury. These free monthly sessions are open to families with Deaf babies and toddlers aged 3 and under. The sessions aim to connect children and families, providing opportunities to share tips, get advice and have access to professionals in the field of deafness. Sessions include topics such as language building blocks, music therapy, baby-signing and sensory play.

www.maryhare.org.uk

LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

Reading FC

Deaf friendly Football Club, keen to encourage more deaf children and young people. Also run the Reading Deaf Football Club (for young people and adults 16+).

Email Tony Turner billpoppip@aol.com

www.readingfc.co.uk

www.englanddeaffootball.co.uk/team/reading-dfc

The Watermill Theatre Outreach Department

The Watermill Theatre in Bagnor, Newbury offers BSL interpreted performances and youth theatre opportunities for children aged 20 months upwards. In addition to their evening and weekend groups they regularly schedule special projects and holiday clubs.

Lixi Chivas telephone 01635 570918 or 07470 114826

Email: lix@watermill.org.uk

www.watermill.org.uk/duologue