Managing with Deafness and Hearing Loss

An information handbook for Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents of West Berkshire
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
Tilehurst
RG31 4UH

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

www.westberks.gov.uk
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
Pincents Lane
Tilehurst
Berkshire
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, other types 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 from ear infections. Both of 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 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 Action on Hearing Loss and the 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 Action on Hearing Loss have lots of information about the type of equipment available and some equipment may be available from your Sensory Needs Team of 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 help 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 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 16 to 64, 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](http://www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline)

Or call the following numbers on Monday to Friday between 8am-6pm:
- Attendance Allowance 0345 605 6055
- DLA (if you were born on or before 8 April 1948) 0345 605 6055
- DLA (if you were born after 8 April 1948) 0345 712 3456
- PIP 0345 850 3322
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 0345 268 8489 Monday to Friday from 8am-6pm
   Email Atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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, Travel Concessions Department on:
   Telephone 01635 519800
   Email transport@westberks.gov.uk

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:

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/

Citizens Advice West Berkshire Branch
citizensadvicewestberkshire.org.uk/
  - Telephone 0300 222 5941

**Jobcentre Plus** for advice on employment related issues and benefits:
www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

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**Benefit**

- Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance: 0345 608 8545 0345 608 8551
- Maternity Allowance: 0345 608 8610 0345 608 8553
- Bereavement: 0345 608 8601 0345 608 8551
- Social Fund: 0345 603 6967 0345 608 8553
- Universal Credit: 0345 600 0723 0345 600 0743
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 door bells 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 Action on Hearing Loss or Connevans.

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 every day 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 that is completely unrelated to English (or any of Britain’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 introduction courses or a Level 1 qualification. Check with your local adult education services for classes near you.

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 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 the 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 makes 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 night time 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. If you have a 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:
- Telephone 0800 018 0527 Monday to Friday 9.15am-4.45pm
- Minicom 0114 258 5694
- Fax 0114 258 2279
- Email info@tinnitus.org.uk
- www.tinnitus.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss also has some good support and information on tinnitus. Find out more or contact them:
- Telephone 0808 808 6666
- Textphone 0808 808 9000
- Email tinnitus helpline@hearingloss.org.uk www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/your-hearing/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. 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).

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 the newest kind of hearing aid and 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 hearing 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 (or call into the drop-in clinic) 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. Try having group conversations, it will be difficult to hear everything that’s being said, but try to follow the conversation.

When comfortable with quieter sounds practise wearing your hearing aids outside, building up to wearing them in noisy places – the sounds may seem very loud until you get used to them but this will become easier over time.

MAINTAINING YOUR HEARING AIDS
If you have NHS hearing aids then batteries are available free from Audiology or most GP surgeries. You will need to take your Hearing Aid Battery Book (the brown book issued when you were fitted with your hearing aids) 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.

LOCAL WEST BERKSHIRE AUDIOLOGY SERVICES
Royal Berkshire Hospital Audiology Department
Telephone 0118 322 7139
Fax 0118 322 7075
Email: Audiology@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Drop-in Hearing Aid Repair Service
Reading – Royal Berkshire Hospital
Monday to Thursday 9.00am – 4.30pm or Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm
Thatcham – West Berkshire Community Hospital
Tuesday and Wednesday 9.00-12.00 / 14.00-16-00

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

**Action on Hearing Loss**
Action on Hearing Loss 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, provide practical advice and support and have a product range of assistive equipment.

For more information go to their website:
[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/)

Or contact their Helpline on:
- Telephone: 0808 808 0123
- Textphone: 0808 808 9000
- Email: Information.Line@hearingloss.org.uk

**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/](http://www.bda.org.uk/)

Or contact them direct on:
- Telephone: 020 7697 4140
- SMS/FaceTime: 07795 410 724
- Email: bda@bda.org.uk
- ooVoo / Skype: bda.britdeafassoc
  *(Video call is available between 12pm to 5pm, Monday to Thursday only)*

**British Tinnitus Association (BTA)**
The BTA is a world leader, with a trained team of friendly and experienced advisers for anyone who experiences tinnitus or those simply seeking guidance or information about the condition. They have a massive resource of information, run support groups and have an on-line forum.

For more information go to their website:
[www.tinnitus.org.uk/](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk/)

Or contact their Helpline on:
- Telephone: 0800 018 0527
- Minicom: 0114 258 5694
- Fax: 0114 258 2279
- Email: info@tinnitus.org.uk
**deafPLUS**
deafPLUS is a charity providing advice, information and support to help promote independence for deaf and hard of hearing people. They have an advocacy service, employment and money advice helplines, a variety of training programmes and provide help with equipment.

To find out more go to their website:  
www.deafplus.org

Or contact them on:
- Telephone: 0207 790 6147 (main number including fundraising)
- Fax: 020 7790 9269
- Email: info@deafplus.org

Employment helpline:
- Monday & Friday 10am-1pm : Tuesday closed : Wednesday & Thursday 2-5pm
- Facetime: hants@deafplus.org
- ooVoo / Skype: deafplus.hampshire

Money Advice helpline:
- Monday & Tuesday 10am-2pm : Wednesday & Thursday 1-5pm : Friday 9am-1pm
- Facetime: julia.pitt@deafplus.org
- Skype: deafplus.helpline

**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:
- **The Grange**, Buckinghamshire
  - Telephone: 01844 348 100 (voice and minicom)
  - Fax: 01844 348101
  - Email: info@hearingdogs.org.uk
- **The Beatrice Wright Centre**, York
  - Telephone: 01759 322299 (voice and minicom)
  - Fax: 01759 322298
  - Email: bwcinfo@hearingdogs.org.uk

To apply for a Hearing Dog use the following contact details:
- Telephone: 01844 348111 (voice and minicom)
- Email: applications@hearingdogs.org.uk
  - www.hearingdogs.org.uk/apply-for-a-hearing-dog/
**HearingLink**
This UK charity helps people to 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 people with moderate hearing loss. Hearing Link also help to form local groups, have a wide ranging volunteer network, provide emotional and practical support and information.

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

Or contact their Helpdesk on:  
Telephone: 0300 111 1113  
Email: helpdesk@hearinglink.org

**Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)**
RAD works with Deaf people to promote equality for Deaf people through the provision of accessible services. 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: 0845 688 2525  
Email: info@royaldeaf.org.uk

**SignHealth**
SignHealth’s work aims to give Deaf people easier access to healthcare and information. They have a range of projects, services and campaigns all for improving the health of Deaf people. Projects include BSL Healthy Minds for people with depression; DeafHope for women and children suffering from domestic violence; as well as supported living care homes, on-line interpreting support and advocacy and outreach services.

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

Or get in touch with them direct:  
Telephone: 01494 687600  
SMS: 07966 976 749  
Email: info@signhealth.org.uk
Other useful sources of information

BSL AND TELEVISION

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

Sign Zone
Popular TV programmes 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
Programmes in British Sign Language broadcast on the Community Channel, Freeview 87, between 6am and 9am
Sky Channel 539, 24 hours a day
Virgin Channel TV233, 24 hours a day

LEISURE

British Deaf Sports Council
Website: www.britishdeafsporuscouncil.org.uk

79 CLUB Football & Sports Club
Paul Merrifield
Email: spenwood1@me.com
www.readingdeafcentre.org.uk/

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 - Stagetext
Some theatre performances are subtitled.
Telephone: 0207 377 0540
Fax: 0207 247 5622
www.stagetext.org/

Travel-Quest
This organisation provides travel and holidays for people who are Deaf.
Quest Directories, 40 Magdalen Avenue, Bath BA2 4QB
www.travel-quest.co.uk
EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Action on Hearing Loss  www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop
  Telephone: 03330 144 525
  Textphone: 03330 144 530
  Email: solutions@hearingloss.org.uk

Connevans  www.deafequipment.co.uk/
  Telephone: 01737 247571
  Fax: 01737 223475
  Minicom: 01737 644016
  Email: askaquestion@connevans.com

Hearing Products International  www.hear4you.com/
  Telephone: 0161 480 8003
  Fax: 0161 480 8006
  Email: info@hear4you.com

LIPREADING CLASSES

Reading Hard of Hearing Club
  Kay Murray          Yvonne John
  Telephone 01428 751343  Text only 07789 915040
  Email david.34murray@btinternet.com  Email ycjohn14@hotmail.com

On-line lipreading learning is available from Hearing Link  www.hearinglink.org/lipreading

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 Social Club
Reading Deaf Centre, 131-133 Cardiff Road, Reading RG1 8JF
Secretary Caron Jones
Email: caronjones_RDC@btinternet.com
www.readingdeafcentre.org.uk/

BADHOGS (Bracknell Area Deaf & Hard of Hearing Support Group)
Telephone: 01344 204366 or 07949 025290
Fax: 01344 885991
Email: info@badhogs.org
www.badhogs.org

Reading Hard of Hearing Club
Chair – Maureen Dickens
Telephone: 0118 926 8055
Email: Maureen_dickens@sky.com
www.readinghardofhearingclub.com
Section 10:

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.

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.

**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.

**How can they help?**

- 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 a 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.

Children's Services, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1RF

Telephone 01628 796786 (answer phone when office closed)

Jane Kilminster, Head of Hearing Impairment Team: 01344 354270
Gillian Coles, Head of Service: 01628 796786

[www.berkshirescs.btck.co.uk/](http://www.berkshirescs.btck.co.uk/)
CODA UK aim to raise the profile of CODA UK and Ireland within D/deaf and hearing communities, as well as educating people on important issues such as the CODA identity.

**How can they help?**

- **Events & activities:** focussed on planning events, activities and develop projects to benefit CODAs across the UK and Ireland of various age groups.
- **CODA library:** an extensive collection of books and DVDs readily available for you to borrow for a small donation. A list of resources can be emailed upon request.
- **Supporting CODAs:** organised activities providing opportunities for social interaction, sharing stories and peer support.
- **Social media:** ability to link and connect on a variety of social media services.

Telephone: 07734 351298  
Email: info@codaukireland.co.uk  
www.codaukireland.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.

**How can they help?**

- 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.

83 Sherwin Road, Nottingham NG7 2FB  
Telephone: 0300 365 7200  
Email: enquiries@deafeducation.org.uk  
www.deafeducation.org.uk/

**Deaf Parenting UK**

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

**How can they help?**

- **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: 07928 842 529  
Fax: 0871 2643323  
Email: info@deafparent.org.uk  
www.deafparent.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.

Telephone: 01844 348111
NGT/Text relay: 18001 01844 348111
Email: applications@hearingdogs.org.uk

Leisure opportunities

Freelance Swimming Coach

Deaf friendly freelance swimming coach in the Berkshire area

Victoria Brown telephone 07879 447829
Email: livefitnow@hotmail.co.uk

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+).

Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EU
Robin Caswell telephone 0118 327 1013
Email: robin@totalcommteam.com
www.readingfc.co.uk

Thatcham Town Ladies & Girls FC

Deaf-Friendly Football Club, keen to encourage more deaf children and young people

Nicholas Lemin telephone 01635 864836 or 07796 274541
Email: lnick1976@me.com

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 114 826
Email: lixi@watermill.org.uk
www.watermill.org.uk
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

How can they help?

- Connect with other parents on-line: asking questions to other parents who have been through similar experiences can be really helpful. Connect via their website.
- Events: weekend events for when your child has just been diagnosed or is about to start primary or secondary school. Events are a great opportunity to meet other families, hear from professionals and get your questions answered. NDCS run free events for deaf children and young people aged 8–16, where they can experience their first night away, try out new activities and sports and make new friends.
- 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. Some equipment is available on loan.
- The Buzz: a website for deaf children and young people www.ndcsbuzz.org.uk
- Information resources: a huge range of publications covering all matter of topics such as communication; education; benefits; understanding deafness.
- National Helpline: support and help on a range of issues including technology, health, social care and discrimination. 9am – 5pm. Live chat available via their website.

Telephone: 0808 800 8880
Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk or ndcs@ndcs.org.uk
www.ndcs.org.uk

Reading Deaf Children’s Society

A parent-led support organisation dedicated to supporting all deaf children, young deaf people and their families in overcoming the challenges of childhood deafness. Most of their members live in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire.

How can they help?

- Supporting deaf children, including those with additional needs, and their families.
- Providing opportunities to develop a social network and participate in fun activities.
- Fully inclusive and welcoming all methods of communication.
- Creating opportunities for parents to share experiences and help support each other.
- Running fundraising and social activities. Fundraising efforts, including quiz nights, Ceilidhs and grant applications, enable them to heavily subsidise their social activities.
- Social activities include annual family BBQ, fun days and panto trip. Other activities during school holidays include horse riding, sno-tubing, canoeing, day trips and parent-only activities such as dad's go-karting and mum's night in.

Alison Bell (Chair) telephone 07764 879764
Samantha McMahon (Secretary) on 07966473331
Email reading@ndcsgroup.org.uk
Find them on Facebook “Reading Deaf Children Society”