

Supporting employees who  
are deaf or have hearing loss  
to thrive at work

 **ACTION ON  
HEARING  
LOSS**

A national charity since 1911



# Employers' *guide*

Formerly  
**RNID** 



*"I was born with hearing loss, which has become severe over the years. Before I came to IKEA, I worked for another large retailer. I felt marginalised by my colleagues there; it wasn't their fault – they just didn't know how to talk to me."*

**Carl Else, Visual Merchandiser, IKEA**



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You can also find the information in this guide online in our Employers' Hub: [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employershub](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employershub)

## Foreword from Action on Hearing Loss

Welcome to our *Employers' Guide*. We've created this guide to provide free information and tips to help organisations become welcoming to, and inclusive of, the 5 million people of working age in the UK who are deaf or have hearing loss.

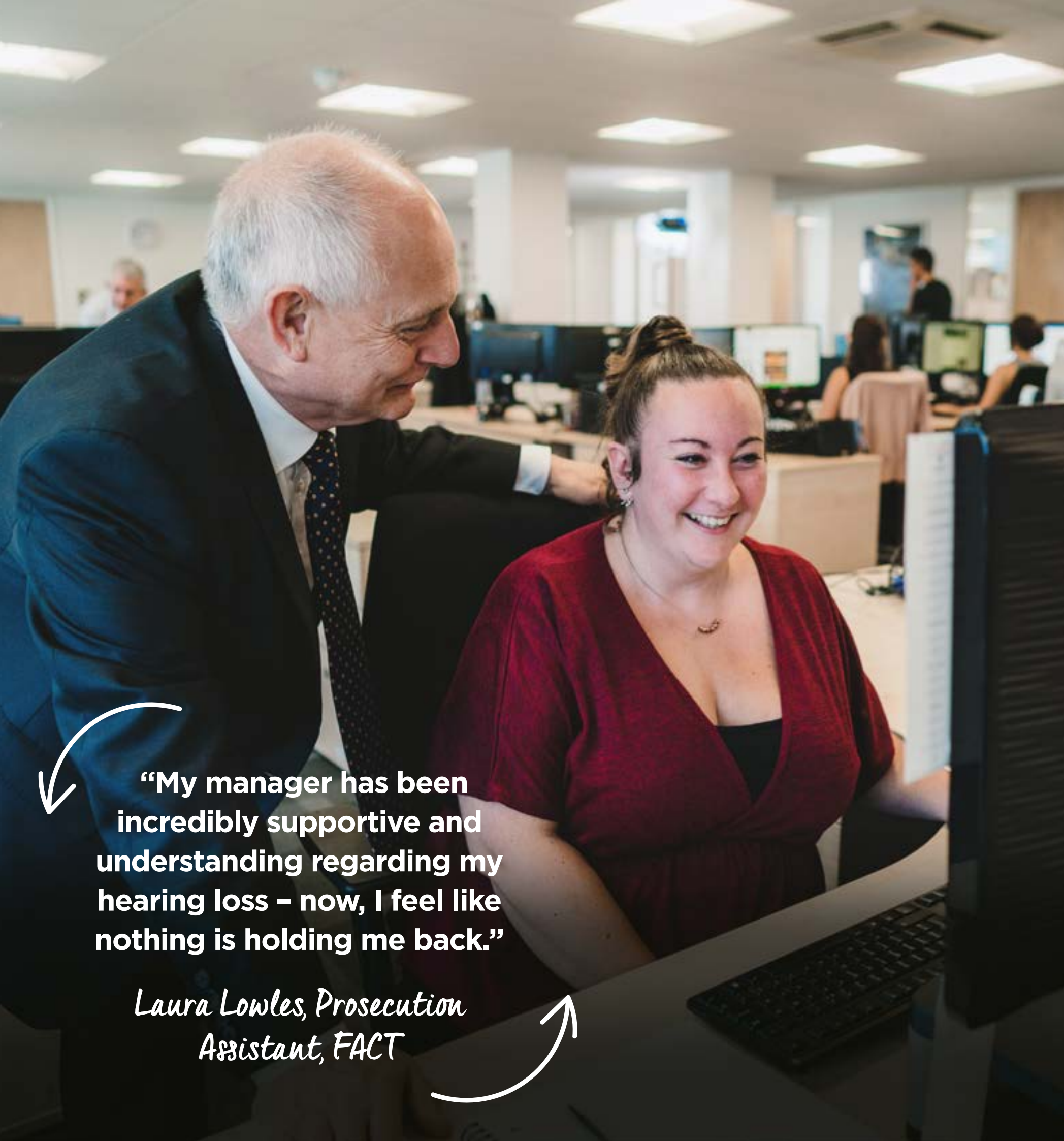
As an employer, you want to attract, recruit and retain the best talent that's out there. Many organisations are upskilling themselves so that they can support staff with less visible disabilities such as mental health problems and autism, and hearing loss is increasingly becoming part of this conversation. More and more organisations – including major employers such as EY, RBS and HMRC – are now making hearing loss a priority. We can support you to do the same.

Our *Employers' Guide* provides guidance on everything from attracting and hiring staff, to creating a culture that gives your employees the confidence to be open about their hearing loss and bring their whole selves to work. You'll find examples of best practice and real stories that demonstrate the ease and value of supporting employees who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Deafness and hearing loss do not limit anyone's capacity for excellence, and we want employers to make the most of this huge pool of talent by enabling existing and prospective staff with deafness and hearing loss to thrive in their workplace.

We hope you find this guide useful. Please share it with line managers, HR, and Diversity and Inclusion teams in your organisation.

**Mark Atkinson,**  
Chief Executive



**“My manager has been incredibly supportive and understanding regarding my hearing loss – now, I feel like nothing is holding me back.”**

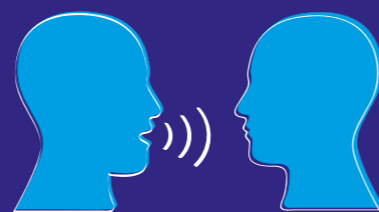
*Laura Lowles, Prosecution  
Assistant, FACT*



Always ask: even if someone's using a hearing aid, ask if they need to lipread you.



Make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking.



Turn your face towards the person you're speaking to, so they can see your lip movements.



Speak clearly, not too slowly, and use normal lip movements, facial expressions and gestures.



Get to the point: use plain language and don't waffle.



Don't cover your mouth when speaking.



Make sure what you're saying is being understood.



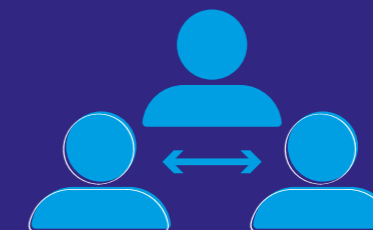
If someone doesn't understand what you've said, try saying it in a different way.



Keep your voice down: it's uncomfortable for a hearing aid user if you shout, and it looks aggressive.



For longer chats, find a place to talk with good lighting, away from noise and distractions.



If you're talking to one person with hearing loss and one without, focus on both people.

# Good workplace

# communication tips

We have a range of deaf awareness resources for your workplace that you can download and print. Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employershub](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employershub)

## About hearing loss

In the UK today, more than 11 million people are living with hearing loss. This can range from a partial to a total inability to hear.

There are many different causes of hearing loss, including exposure to loud noise, certain drugs used to treat serious illnesses, genetics and ear conditions. Some babies are born deaf.

Most hearing loss, however, occurs naturally as part of the ageing process. It affects 42% of people aged over 50.

Hearing specialists categorise hearing loss using four different levels: mild, moderate, severe and profound. The terms 'mild' and 'moderate' can be misleading, though, as they don't reflect the impact that these levels of hearing loss will have on the individual.

All levels of hearing loss can make communication in the workplace difficult if the right support isn't provided:

**Mild hearing loss** makes it hard to follow speech, particularly in noisy situations, or for long periods of time. Your employees with mild hearing loss may miss quieter speech and find it difficult to follow what's being said in a noisy office or in meetings. They may or may not use hearing aids, depending on what steps they've taken to address their hearing difficulties.

**Moderate hearing loss** makes people mishear words and struggle to hear when there's background noise and in group conversations. It's likely that your employees with moderate hearing loss will use hearing aids, but they may still struggle to hear in noisy environments, such as when more than one person speaks at a time or at social events.

**Severe hearing loss** makes it difficult to hear speech in most situations, even with hearing aids. Your employees with severe hearing loss are likely to lipread and use assistive technology, such as a conversation listener, to help them communicate with colleagues.

**Profound deafness** means it's likely that hearing aids won't help with hearing speech, but they may help with identifying which direction sounds come from. Some people who are profoundly deaf communicate through speech and lipreading, while others use sign language. Assistive technology and communication support (see page 29) can aid communication with hearing colleagues. Some people who do not use sign language may choose to have a cochlear implant, if it's a suitable option.

People who use sign language as their first or preferred language are part of the Deaf community; they refer to themselves as being 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' to emphasise their Deaf identity. Sign language involves a combination of hand shapes and movements, lip patterns, facial expressions and shoulder movements. It has its own grammar and is structured in a completely different way to English.

## The impact of hearing loss in the workplace

Deafness and hearing loss needn't be a barrier to people applying for and excelling in most jobs. All that's needed is understanding and support from managers and colleagues – but we know this isn't always provided. Research suggests that more than half of employees with hearing loss put off telling their employer about it, for fear of a negative reaction.

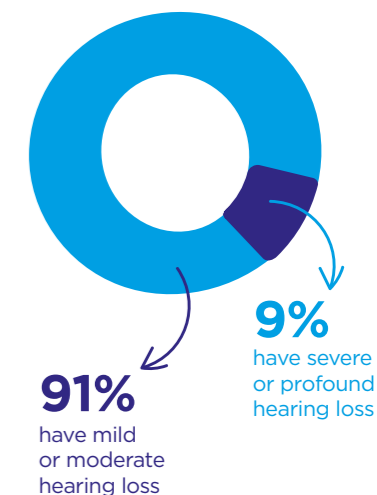
With hearing loss affecting around 12 in every 100 employees, it's crucial to create a workplace culture where prospective and existing employees can be open about their hearing loss and have equal access to opportunities at work.

A lack of understanding about hearing loss, combined with a lack of support, can lead to talented individuals missing out on job opportunities and promotions. Worryingly, it can also lead to teasing, mocking or bullying at work. This needs to change.

# 42%

of over-50-year-olds have some level of hearing loss.

**Of these people:**



**working-age people in the UK have some level of hearing loss – that's around**

*12 in every 100 employees.*

# Hearing loss in the workplace



**There are at least 24,000**

people across the UK who use sign language as their main language – although this is likely to be an underestimate.



“I used to work in customer service. My manager didn’t believe I could do parts of my job because of my deafness. No one knows my abilities better than me; don’t be afraid to just ask.”

Tasha Henderson,  
HR Professional

## Our recent survey of working-age people with hearing loss found:



More than *half* have put off telling their employer about their *hearing loss*

**7 in 10**

said colleagues have not communicated effectively with them



**60%**

had retired early and, of those people, 56% said that this was related to their hearing loss.

For more information about our survey, visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/research-reports](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/research-reports)

**“I started wearing hearing aids in my early 20s. My hearing loss did knock my confidence in my early career as a lawyer, but it ultimately hasn’t held me back. I’ve now made Partner and my client base continues to grow and grow.”**

*Hugh Strickland,  
Corporate Finance Partner,  
Aaron & Partners*

## The value of employing and retaining staff with hearing loss

By making your organisation attractive and welcoming to people with hearing loss, you’ll be broadening your talent pool and enabling your staff to reach their full potential.

There’s value far beyond ‘doing the right thing’ and complying with equality law – it makes good business sense.

What’s more, while people of all ages are affected by hearing loss, we’re most likely to lose our hearing as we get older: 42% of people over 50 have hearing loss. With the pension age increasing to 66 for men and women in 2020, hearing loss is set to become a hot-button topic – so getting to grips with it now will better equip you to retain your most valued and experienced staff.

The government’s Access to Work scheme provides financial support towards the cost of practical workplace adjustments for people who are deaf or have hearing loss. So there’s nothing stopping you from making the most of the wealth of talent that’s out there. We cover Access to Work in more detail on page 30.

Major employers, such as EY, Shearman & Sterling and RBS, are recognising the value of making their organisation more inclusive of people who are deaf or have hearing loss. EY and Ability EY recently worked with us to launch the Hearing Leadership Challenge, during which senior partners took part in activities showing the impact of deafness and hearing loss at work.

**To find out more about the Hearing Leadership Challenge, email [partnerships@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:partnerships@hearingloss.org.uk)**

**“We value all our employees and a disability does not change that. We always ensure any member of staff with a disability is given the help, support and the tools they require to carry out their role within our company.”**

*Heidi Harris, Business and HR Manager, FACT*



**“I was devastated when I lost my hearing overnight. As well as having to come to terms with the hearing loss, I worried about how I’d be able to do my job as I had before. My manager, Steve, was really understanding and reassuring – he told me that there were adjustments that could be made to support me.**

**The changes we’ve made have been really simple but really effective. We’ve done things like move my desk so it’s facing the office, so I don’t have noise behind me. And Steve sits in front of me so I can lipread him easily.”**

*Laura Lowles, Prosecution  
Assistant, FACT*



**Research tells us that people who are deaf or have hearing loss may be put off applying for jobs because of concern that their communication needs won't be met during the interview process.**

## Advertising jobs

Make sure that your job adverts let prospective applicants know that you champion equality and diversity in the workplace and will support people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

Here are our tips for reaching people who are deaf or have hearing loss:

- Sign up for the Disability Confident scheme (see page 31) and include the badge on your advert – this shows potential employees your commitment to supporting people with disabilities.
- Some people with hearing loss may prefer not to use the phone, so always provide an alternative contact method for people who want more information – for example, an email address or a mobile number for SMS messaging.
- Brief any recruitment agencies you use on your ambition to recruit a diverse workforce including people with disabilities, and ensure they are familiar with the content of this guide.
- If you are based in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, you can contact our Employment Support Services, which support people who are deaf or have hearing loss to access and thrive in employment. We also have a small employment service in Southampton, England. Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employment-support-services](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/employment-support-services)



## The application process

To make your application process accessible for people who are deaf and use sign language, take a flexible approach:

- Clearly state on the application form that you offer communication support at interviews, if required, including a sign language interpreter or speech-to-text reporter (see page 29 for more on communication support).
- Ensure the application form is in plain English and avoids jargon so that it's more accessible for sign language users, for whom English is a second language.
- Consider offering a job trial as part of the recruitment process. Work trials give applicants a chance to demonstrate their skills in a practical way, rather than having to go through a formal recruitment process that might be inaccessible to them. Employer Advisors at Jobcentres can provide more information about offering job trials.

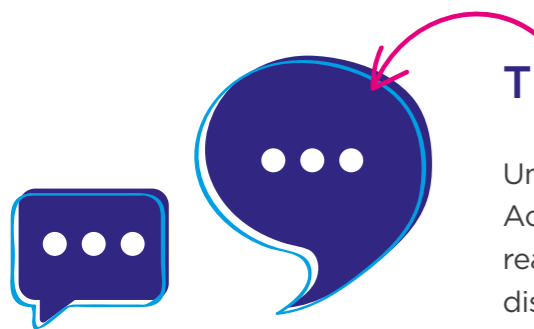
### Application form



## Guaranteed interviews

Employers who have reached level 2 or 3 of the Disability Confident scheme (see page 31) should offer an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job – this applies to people with all levels of hearing loss if they consider themselves to be disabled. For sign language users, this provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate their abilities in their first language at interview, and advertising that you are part of this scheme may encourage a broader section of the hearing loss talent pool to apply.

# Recruiting people who are deaf or have hearing loss



## The interview

Under the Equality Act 2010, or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland, employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that candidates who are disabled are not put at a substantial disadvantage during the recruitment process. When you invite candidates to interview, ask them if they will require any adjustments on the day.

Make sure you're clear about what the interview will consist of, as this may help candidates to determine whether adjustments are needed. For example, let them know whether a group exercise, written test or presentation is involved.

Finding out about communication needs and ensuring any required adjustments are arranged ahead of the interview will give candidates who are deaf or have hearing loss the best chance to demonstrate their ability for the position, and ensure they are not unfairly disadvantaged during the recruitment process.

The adjustments required will vary from person to person – always ask. They could include, for example, providing communication support such as a sign language interpreter, or following tips to enable the candidate to lipread you (see page 27 for more on reasonable adjustments).

When communication support is required, book the service as early as possible. Demand is extremely high.

**For information on working with and booking different communication professionals, see our Communication range of factsheets at [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communication-factsheets](https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communication-factsheets)**

### Tips to make interviews accessible

Here are some general ways you can make your interviews accessible for people with hearing loss:

- Enable lipreading: make sure the lighting in the interview room is good so that the candidate can clearly see the interviewer's lips. The candidate should not be facing a window, as this puts the interviewer's face in shadow. Check with the candidate that the seating arrangement works for them.



## Funding adjustments

**If a candidate needs a communication professional, such as a sign language interpreter, the applicant will likely be able to obtain funding for this through the government's Access to Work scheme. See our section on government support, page 30.**

- Give the candidate the interview questions on paper, just before the interview starts.
- Remember that the candidate can't see your face to lipread you while you are writing notes.
- If you're using a sign language interpreter, remember to address questions to the candidate, not their interpreter.

You can find more communication tips on pages 6–7.

### Can I ask the candidate about their hearing loss during the interview?

Under the Equality Act 2010, or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland, you can't ask someone about their hearing loss during the interview, although there are a couple of exceptions to this. For more details, see the EHRC's website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/guidance-employers](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/guidance-employers)

You should ask the applicant about their abilities to do the job, not about whether their hearing loss will mean they can't do it. Keep in mind that, with support, hearing loss needn't be a barrier to people carrying out most jobs.

## Making a job offer

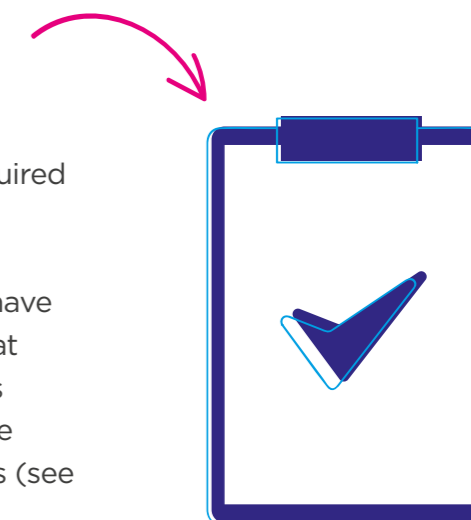
Encourage successful candidates to let you know about any disability or health condition that may impact on their work when you make them a job offer – so you can make any required adjustments before they start.

Our survey of employees with hearing loss found that 54% have put off telling an employer about it. In addition, we know that many people who have hearing loss don't see themselves as having a disability. Make it clear that the support you provide includes workplace adjustments for people with hearing loss (see our suggested wording for your offer letter, above right).

Please don't assume that a person with hearing loss knows what adjustments they might need. Ask them if they need any help with this – they may benefit from a Workplace Assessment (see page 27).

## Suggested wording for your offer letter

**“If you have a disability or health condition that affects you at work, we are committed to making adjustments to make it easier for you to do your job. This could involve changing the way we do things, making physical changes to the office and providing extra aids or support. Please let us know if there is anything we can arrange or put in place for you before your first day.”**





Repeat the message that your organisation values diversity and provides support for people with a disability or health condition that affects their ability to do their job. This may encourage new starters to tell you about any hearing loss.



Offer a Workplace Assessment to new starters who are deaf or have hearing loss, to identify what adjustments are needed. Access to Work may cover up to 100% of the cost of adjustments if the application process is started within the first six weeks of employment.

**A thorough induction process is particularly important for employees who are deaf or have hearing loss. It's the ideal opportunity for practices to be set up to support someone, so they're embedded in the employee's and team's ways of doing things.**

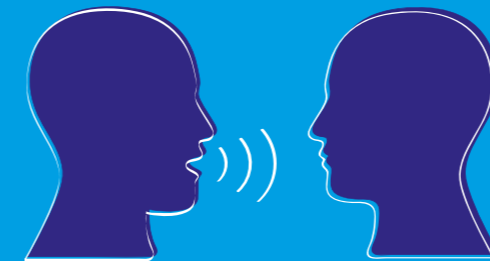
# Key things to consider at induction



Once the employee has started, check that any adjustments made are working and if any more are needed. If they are office based, make sure they are sitting in an area where there's not too much background noise.



Sign language users may need more time to go through written induction documents, because English isn't their first language. Ensure a sign language interpreter is available to assist them. Phase the induction programme, so there's not a mass of information to go through in one session.



Give team members the opportunity to learn communication skills to support their new colleague - and other existing and future colleagues who may have hearing loss. See page 36 for more on deaf awareness courses.




New employees with hearing loss may also be interested to know about other people with hearing loss within your organisation. Informal staff networks or organised groups can be useful channels of communication for staff with hearing loss.



**“IKEA has been so supportive from day one. I feel totally myself at work – I love what I do and I’m judged on my merits rather than my limitations.”**

*Carl Else,  
Visual Merchandiser, IKEA*



**“I didn’t want to be known as ‘the deaf one’ or treated differently. Eventually, age, acceptance and a supportive line manager encouraged me to be open about my hearing loss.”**

*Jennifer Stanley,  
NHS England*

**When employers show understanding and provide support, people who are deaf or have hearing loss can thrive in the workplace.**

Hearing loss is often a non-visible disability. Many people feel there is a stigma around the condition and so hide their hearing loss in both their personal and professional lives. It’s therefore vital to create an environment in which employees feel comfortable to be open about their hearing difficulties. This will be increasingly important as the prevalence of hearing loss in the workplace grows as the retirement age increases.


### Talking about hearing loss

HR departments and line managers should be trained on what to do if an employee says they have hearing loss.

Here are our tips for talking about hearing loss:

- Let managers and staff know that 1:1 meetings are a good opportunity for employees to discuss the development of any health condition that might be relevant to their work.
- Once an employee shares information about their hearing loss with you, it’s OK to ask how their hearing loss affects what they can hear, and the effect it’s having at work.
- Offer a Workplace Assessment when an employee informs you of their hearing loss, and reassure them that your organisation will support them to manage their hearing loss at work.
- If you offer health checks for your employees, include a hearing check as part of this. Make it clear during these checks that your organisation is on hand to support anyone who is diagnosed with hearing loss.

# Supporting employees with hearing loss



**“EY have been really great. When I got the job, they contacted me and we explored the different elements of my role in relation to my deafness. We looked at what the gaps would be and how we would bridge them.”**

*Ganeev Chadha,  
Senior Commercial  
Analyst, EY*

## Workplace Assessments

We recommend offering employees who are deaf or have hearing loss a Workplace Assessment. This will identify simple changes you can make to remove barriers for your employees, so they can perform at their best.

During a Workplace Assessment, an assessor looks at the employee's needs and recommends the most appropriate support and equipment in a detailed report. Usually, some very simple, low-cost adjustments can make a big difference.

Once you've established what adjustments your employee needs, make a record of what these are and implement them. You should also schedule regular catch-ups with your employee to check how the adjustments are working for them and whether or not they need amending.

**Action on Hearing Loss offers Workplace Assessments. See page 35.**

## Reasonable adjustments

Employers are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to make sure that workers who are disabled, including people with hearing loss, are not substantially disadvantaged during the recruitment process or when doing their jobs.

Don't fear the price tag of providing this vital support - many adjustments will be simple and free or inexpensive to implement, such as improving the working environment, offering flexible working hours or providing assistive products.

The government's Access to Work scheme can help organisations cover the cost of more expensive workplace adjustments such as the provision of communication support.

Remember, everyone is different and so the adjustments required will vary.

**“I found out about Access to Work and booked myself a Workplace Assessment. The assessor talked through my challenges and had solutions both in terms of technology and raising awareness of my needs among my colleagues.”**

*Jennifer Stanley,  
NHS England*

## Tips for improving the working environment

- To improve the acoustics in an office:
  - use soft furnishings such as carpets
  - install acoustic panels
  - fit rubber caps on chair and table legs.
- Position an employee with hearing loss in a work area that has good acoustics and where they can see the rest of the room.
- Adjust the layout of a meeting room and use good lighting to help everybody see each other clearly, which is important for lipreading.
- If you play music in your workplace, either turn this off or down.
- If your employee uses a communication professional such as a sign language interpreter, factor in the need to seat an additional professional, and ensure they are in a well-lit area.

## Flexible working

People who are deaf or have hearing loss may need to work somewhere quieter and, if they need to, take time during the day to attend an audiology or cochlear implant appointment.

*"We've set up a team WhatsApp group so we can communicate on the shop floor. We don't get it right every time, but Carl reminds us if we get it wrong."*

**James Goldthorpe,  
Team Leader, IKEA**



## Assistive products and technology

There's a wide range of products and technology that can help to remove barriers in the workplace for people who are deaf or have hearing loss – from amplified telephones to the Roger Pen, which is a conversation listener that can facilitate communication in meetings. Also consider a hearing loop system for your meeting room to help hearing aid users understand speech over background noise. See the Action on Hearing Loss online shop for more information: [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop)

It's also worth considering that assistive technology doesn't have to be an extra or specialised piece of equipment. Lots of everyday software programmes and devices, such as smartphones, have built-in features that can enhance accessibility for people with hearing loss.

## Communication support

People who are deaf or have hearing loss will require different communication professionals depending upon their needs and the situation:

- sign language interpreters are trained to interpret spoken English into sign language and vice versa
- lipspeakers convey the spoken word using clear lip shapes, facial expressions and natural gestures to clarify what is being said
- electronic notetakers type a summary of the spoken word onto a laptop using specialist software
- speech-to-text reporters capture a word-for-word record of what's said by using a specialised phonetic keyboard connected to a computer; this can then be linked to one computer, or a public screen.

Note: If you're booking a sign language interpreter, to ensure quality, you must book a professional who is registered with either the [National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People \(NRCPD\)](#) or the [Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters \(SASLI\)](#) in Scotland.

You can book high-quality communication support through Action on Hearing Loss (see page 35).



*"Ten years ago, I woke up one day to find I'd lost most of my hearing. I was the first firefighter in the UK to be a double hearing-aid wearer. My senior officer said: 'So what do we need to do to get you back to work again?'. It wasn't a problem."*

**Steve Mintern,  
Royal Berkshire Fire  
& Rescue Service**

## Government support

### Access to Work

Access to Work is a government grant that can help pay for adjustments. The value of the grant that the employee receives depends on their circumstances, and an employer may also have to cover some of the costs, depending on factors such as the size of the organisation.

It is the employee's responsibility to make an application for an Access to Work grant – they will receive an assessment that matches their needs with the correct support and an appropriate budget will be set. For employees who are deaf or have hearing loss, this support may be an assistive product or the provision of communication support (such as a sign language interpreter or speech-to-text-reporter). Access to Work grants may meet these costs up to an annual limit of £57,200.

The Access to Work application should be submitted at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Find out more about the Access to Work scheme in Great Britain at [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)**

**Find out more about Access to Work in Northern Ireland at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information)**

*"Access to Work helped the station implement adjustments to help me. Around five months after I'd lost my hearing, I was back and fully operational on the fire engine."*

**Steve Mintern, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service**



## Disability Confident scheme

Disability Confident is a government scheme that aims to help attract, recruit and retain disabled people. The Disability Confident scheme replaced the previous Two Ticks scheme.

The government gives advice to employers about how they can become Disability Confident. There are three levels of commitment that you can sign up for, and you have to pass each level before moving on to the next. Not only does the scheme help you to think about how you might make your workplace more accessible, it's also an effective way of demonstrating to your staff that you are committed to having an accessible workplace. This is a good way of encouraging people to talk about their hearing loss.

**Find out more at [www.gov.uk/collections/disability-confident-campaign](http://www.gov.uk/collections/disability-confident-campaign)**

## Health and safety guidance for employers

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 doesn't include any disability-specific requirement for employers. That means health and safety requirements for people who are deaf or have hearing loss are essentially the same as for hearing people. But, under equality law, you have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that an employee with hearing loss isn't put at a 'substantial disadvantage' compared with everyone else.

There are a number of things you may want to consider when planning support for your employees with hearing loss. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

### Emergency situations

- Visual fire alarms – make sure all private and quiet areas, such as toilets and prayer rooms, have flashing alarms to alert people.
- Fire and emergency wardens – make sure wardens are aware of employees who have hearing loss. We recommend that they complete deaf awareness training, to ensure they're able to communicate effectively in an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plan – it's vital that this is available to employees and in an accessible format at all times.





## Accessible health and safety training

Any staff training must be accessible to people who are deaf or have hearing loss. This could include providing communication support, such as interpreters, lipspeakers, or speech-to-text reporters. If you're using videos, make sure they have subtitles.

## Hearing protection and workplace screening

If an individual routinely works in a noisy environment, their employer will be required to provide them with hearing checks – these requirements are for workers with an average exposure to noise over 80db. These checks should be an opportunity to evaluate an individual's hearing and, as well as making assessments about their continued exposure to loud noise, think about any other support they might need to help with their hearing in the workplace.

## Lone-working policy

Your lone-working policy should ensure that any person with hearing loss can easily make contact with appropriate colleagues – for example, by SMS text message. Where a person with hearing loss regularly works alone in an office, you should consider providing a flashing doorbell or vibrating pager to alert the person if someone wants to enter the office.

*"By implementing a buddy system for fire evacuation and buying a portable doorbell, we made sure that health and safety wasn't an issue."*

**Stephen Gerrard,  
Manager, FACT**



## Reporting absence

It's standard practice for an employee to report to their line manager if they're unwell and unable to come into work. Your policy should make it clear that texting or emailing is acceptable so that people with hearing loss can easily inform their manager when they can't come into work.

## Lifts

Thought is rarely given to how a person who is deaf or has hearing loss can communicate in the event of a lift breaking down. Typically, the only way for a trapped person to communicate is by the intercom. Consider installing alternative methods, such as SMS or a wall-mounted textphone. If this isn't possible, display instructions so the trapped person knows what to do and how long they may be waiting. You should then amend your procedures to make sure that you respond to all alarm calls, by all methods and regardless of whether communication has been made.

### *3 tips for supporting employees with hearing loss from the EY team:*

- + Everyone's different, so ask your employee how you can help.
- + A Workplace Assessment can tell you what adjustments might be needed.
- + Create a culture where people feel able to talk about their disability.

Action on Hearing Loss offers a range of services to help employers support their employees who are deaf or have hearing loss. From Workplace Assessments to deaf awareness training, assistive products to communication support, we can help you make your workplace more inclusive and ensure you meet your legal obligations.

## Workplace Assessments

A Workplace Assessment will improve the working environment for staff with hearing loss. An assessor will meet with you and your employee to discuss any barriers in the workplace, and suggest reasonable adjustments to help them work more easily and effectively. Usually, some very simple, low-cost changes will make all the difference. The assessment report can be used to apply for the government's Access to Work funding.

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/workplace-assessments](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/workplace-assessments)

## Communication support for businesses

We can provide qualified and registered communication professionals to support your employees who are deaf or have hearing loss on a regular or ad-hoc basis:

- sign language interpreters
- speech-to-text reporters
- lipspeakers
- notetakers (manual and electronic).

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communication](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communication)

“Now I can focus on actually making a difference, and doing the job I know I can do.”

James Clark, Business Officer, Education and Skills Funding Agency, recipient of Workplace Assessment

“I think my experience shows that with the right support, hearing loss doesn't need to be a barrier for anyone.”

Steve Minter, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service

# How we help employers



“The course is making our staff more aware of the issues deaf people face and helping them to work more confidently alongside their deaf colleagues.”

Malcom Kelly, Assistant Commissioner for London Fire Brigade

## Deaf awareness and sign language training

Give your staff the confidence and skills they need to communicate with people who are deaf or have hearing loss. We run a wide range of deaf awareness and British Sign Language (BSL) courses across the UK, with the option of in-house training delivered at your workplace.

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/training](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/training)

## E-learning course

Our ‘Get Deaf Aware’ online training course produces immediate results with total flexibility. It can be completed in approximately 60 minutes without leaving your desk. Empower your staff with improved awareness and communication skills that will transform how they work with colleagues who have hearing loss.

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/elearning](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/elearning)

## Install a hearing support system

You can instantly improve the working environment for employees who use hearing aids by installing a hearing support system (commonly called a ‘hearing loop’), which amplifies speech while reducing background noise. Our dedicated team will explain the different types of loop systems available and advise which option is most appropriate for your workplace.

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/installations](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/installations)

## Assistive products and technology

We can also suggest assistive products and technology that can make the workplace safer and more accessible for people who are deaf or have hearing loss. We offer a wide range of equipment – from flashing fire alarms and amplified phones to conversation listeners such as the Roger Pen, which can facilitate communication in meetings.

Visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop)

“The team worked flexibly and effectively to deliver our new loop. We are very happy with their service and professionalism.”

Stephen, The Community Centre @ Christ Church



“The Roger Pen is a small conversation listener that improves clarity of speech. It's made such a difference to my wellbeing at work. I can participate more in meetings and in office chats. I'm amazed at what I can now hear and I don't feel exhausted at the end of the day.”

Clare Bowdler,  
Marketing Professional



Please get in touch to find out more about how we can help you.

**Telephone: 03332 405 658**

(calls welcome using Next Generation Text)

**Email: [access.solutions@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:access.solutions@hearingloss.org.uk)**



“The first thing I say when sitting down with new clients is, ‘I don’t know if you’re aware, but I’m partially deaf – do you mind if I sit there?’. They’re completely fine about it.”

*Hugh Strickland, Corporate Finance  
Partner, Aaron & Partners*

**Action on Hearing Loss** (formerly RNID) is the largest UK charity helping people who are confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.

We give support and care, develop technology and treatments, and campaign for equality.

We rely on donations to continue our vital work.

To find out more, visit [actiononhearingloss.org.uk](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

### **Contact our free, confidential Information Line:**

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

SMS 0780 000 0360

(standard text message rates apply)

Email [information@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:information@hearingloss.org.uk)

### **Join us**

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