

Enjoying
**TV, film
and the arts**



A national charity since 1911



Formerly
RNID •)))

“I’ve always enjoyed the arts and would really miss out if subtitled film screenings and captioned theatre performances weren’t available. I lost my hearing seven years ago, due to a rare illness, and while my cochlear implant is fantastic, I sometimes struggle to follow everything that’s said in films and shows.

I watch around one subtitled film a week at the cinema and the experience is usually very good. I also see a lot of plays and musicals at the theatre that are captioned by the charity Stagertext - they’re brilliant! The charity also provides live speech-to-text reporting of museum and art gallery talks across the UK. Don’t let hearing loss hold you back from enjoying the arts - see what’s on near you!”

[Richard Turner, London](#)



Hearing loss shouldn't stop you from enjoying TV, film and the arts. This leaflet tells you where you can find TV programmes, films and performances that are subtitled or signed. We also let you know about the assistive technology that can help.

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Please let our Information Line know if you'd like this leaflet in large print, braille or audio (see back page for contact details).

Where can I find subtitled TV programmes and films?

The vast majority of TV channels have subtitles, but some smaller channels, as well as new channels, may not. Most BBC channels have subtitles on all of their programmes, as does Channel 4.

Catch-up TV

Most of the UK's main broadcasters offer an online catch-up TV service on their website, which lets you watch shows you've missed, usually for a limited time after they are broadcast:

- BBC iPlayer – bbc.co.uk/iplayer
- ITV Hub – itv.com
- Channel 4 On Demand (All 4) – channel4.com
- My5 – channel5.com

You can also access these catch-up services on your smartphone or tablet device by downloading free apps from Google Play or the App Store, and on your TV using platforms such as YouView and Now TV.

Subtitles

BBC iPlayer has subtitles available on almost all of its programmes, no matter how you access the service.

The other catch-up services have subtitles available on around 70% to 85% of programmes when you watch using the website or app. But subtitles may not be available when you access these catch-up services on other platforms.

Live TV streams

You can also watch a TV programme at the time it's broadcast, free of charge, through a 'live stream' on the TV channel's website. Subtitles are now available on most BBC live streams but not, currently, on other channels' live streams.

Subscription TV and film services

For a monthly fee (subscription), you can watch a wide range of films and TV programmes online through on-demand services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Instant Video and Now TV.

Before signing up for any of these services, check whether they have subtitles – not all of them do. Many Netflix programmes are subtitled, as are more than half of the programmes on Amazon services. We are working with the main subscription-service providers to increase the amount of subtitled programmes that are available.



You can visit Ofcom's website to find out what proportion of on-demand programmes are subtitled for each TV channel and subscription service. Visit [ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/accessibility-research/odps-accessibility-report/interactive-report](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/accessibility-research/odps-accessibility-report/interactive-report)



Thanks to more than 6,000 people who took action for our Subtitle it! campaign, in April 2017, parliament passed new legislation to make sure that on-demand broadcasters will be legally required to provide minimum levels of subtitles.

We won't see the changes straight away, but they are coming.

To find out more about our campaign, and to keep track of the government's progress, visit actionhearingloss.org.uk/subtitleit

DVDs

Many films and TV programmes released on DVD have subtitles – look out for 'English subtitles' on the back of the case. Some DVDs are also described as 'subtitled for hard of hearing viewers'. These subtitles include non-audio sound effects and speaker identification, as well as dialogue, to make it easier for you to follow the film.

You can also rent DVDs and Blu-Rays using services such as Cinema Paradiso, which has a search feature allowing you to look for DVDs with subtitles. Visit cinemaparadiso.co.uk/collections/subtitles/english

How do I make a complaint about subtitles or background noise?

TV programmes

If you find it hard to follow a TV programme because of background noise or music within the programme, or if the subtitles are poor quality, let the channel know, giving the date and time that the programme was broadcast.

For our guide on how to write a complaint letter and where to send it, visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/writeacomplaint

If you use Twitter, you could also contact the channel with your complaint by sending a Tweet and encouraging your friends and contacts to do the same. Public pressure is the best way to encourage improvements in access to TV when broadcasters aren't currently meeting with legal requirements.

Where can I find signed TV programmes?

Ofcom requires TV channels to provide a percentage of programmes in British Sign Language (BSL). The BBC channels (excluding BBC Parliament) are required to sign 5% of their content. ITV1, Channel 4, Five and S4C1 are required to sign 10% of their programmes.

You can check the TV listings, or on each channel's website, to find signed programmes. The signed programmes are usually spoken-English programmes translated into BSL by an interpreter, who appears at the bottom of the screen. BBC Two has a long-running magazine programme called *See Hear*, which is presented in BSL.

The British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust (BSLBT) was set up in 2008 as an alternative way for smaller, independent TV channels to meet their duty to provide programmes in BSL. Instead of producing and broadcasting their own signed programmes, smaller channels can pay an annual subscription fee to BSLBT to make programmes in BSL, by Deaf people for Deaf people.

The BSL programmes are aired on the Community Channel, Film 4 and on the Trust's website at [bslzone.co.uk](https://www.bslzone.co.uk) They are also free to watch on the Trust's BSL Zone app, which you can download from the App Store or Google Play.

What can help me hear my TV, radio and music player?

You can get many assistive products that may help, depending on your level of hearing loss, including:

- loudspeakers, which can improve sound quality
- wireless headphones that allow you to listen at a louder volume without disturbing others
- TV listeners, which make sounds louder and clearer – they can be used with or without hearing aids or a cochlear implant
- hearing loop or infrared systems for the home ([see page 11](#)), which let you receive sound from a source, such as your TV, straight into your hearing aids or cochlear implant processor.



Find out more in our leaflet *Assistive technology for hearing loss*.

Which cinemas show subtitled films?

Almost all large cinemas in the UK and Ireland, and many smaller cinemas, regularly screen the latest popular releases with subtitles displayed at the bottom of the screen. Along with the dialogue from the film, the subtitles include non-dialogue audio such as “(sighs)” or “(door creaks)”.

Most cinema auditoriums also have hearing support in the form of a hearing loop or infrared system ([see page 11](#)), which can help you to hear the film soundtrack.

To find subtitled film screenings near you, visit [accessiblescreeningsuk.com](https://www.accessiblescreeningsuk.com). This website is run by the UK Cinema Association and contains a searchable listings database for accessible screenings in UK cinemas. It also contains a form for you to feedback on your experiences at a cinema, whether good or bad.

Do you need support when going to the cinema?

If you need support when going to the cinema as a result of a disability, you can apply for a CEA card, provided by the UK Cinema Association. The card gives free admission to the person assisting you, while you pay the full price for your ticket.

To apply for the card, you need to provide proof that you receive one of the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment.

To find out more, visit ceacard.co.uk or

Telephone **01244 526 016**

Textphone **18001 01244 526 016**

Email info@ceacard.co.uk

Can I get help to hear in public places?

Yes. Many public places – including theatres, cinemas, station ticket offices, shops and banks – have hearing loop or infrared systems that can help you to hear sound more clearly over background noise. They work by sending sound from a source, such as a microphone, directly to your hearing aids or listening device.

How do I use a hearing loop system?

If you use hearing aids, set them to the hearing loop setting (formerly the 'T' setting). If your hearing aids don't have this setting, speak to your audiologist – they may need to activate it for you.

If you don't have hearing aids, you can use a loop-listening device with headphones, earphones or a headset.

How do I use an infrared system?

An infrared system is often used as an alternative to a loop system in entertainment venues. If an infrared system is available, you'll need to collect a receiver (sometimes called a listener) from the reception desk or ticket office.

If you use hearing aids, you'll need a receiver that has a neckloop, which you use with your hearing aids on the loop setting. If you don't use hearing aids, you'll need a receiver with headphones.



Find out more about this equipment in our factsheet *Assistive listening devices*.

Where can I find out about captioned and signed live performances and events?

Stagetext is a charity that provides captioning and live subtitling services to theatres and other arts venues. When a theatre performance is captioned, a caption unit near the stage displays words at the same time as they are spoken or sung. Live subtitles are used for talks and lectures – they appear on a large screen near the speaker.

To find out about accessible performances near you, visit stagetext.org or call **020 7377 0540**.

Signed Culture is a charity that provides BSL interpretations at theatre performances and other cultural events, such as museum and gallery talks. In a signed theatre performance, a sign language interpreter, usually standing to one side of the stage, interprets the speech and singing.

To find out about signed performances and events in your area, visit signedculture.org.uk

If I'm not happy with a venue, how do I complain?

If you can't enjoy a film, performance or event because there isn't the right support in place for people who are deaf or have hearing loss, tell the manager that you're not satisfied with the access they provide. You may have to fill in a short comment or complaint form.

If venues receive a lot of feedback, it can lead to changes.

Where can I get more information and support?

Action on Hearing Loss has a wide range of information on all aspects of deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss. We have the latest information on hearing aids and cochlear implants, assistive technology and products, communication support, rights and benefits.

You can also find out about services in your area, becoming a member and receiving our magazine, the latest research developments, and getting involved as a volunteer or supporter.

Visit our website – actiononhearingloss.org.uk – or contact our free, confidential Information Line: call **0808 808 0123**, send a text message to **0780 000 0360** or email information@hearingloss.org.uk

You can also find our full range of leaflets and factsheets on our website at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/publications

Information you can trust

The Information Standard certifies us as producers of high-quality, evidence-based information. For a list of references for this leaflet, please email references@hearingloss.org.uk

Did you find this information helpful?

Please tell us what you think of this leaflet – did you find it useful? Could we improve it? Please email us at reviewpanel@hearingloss.org.uk And if you'd like to join our Readers' Panel, to help us create and review information for our website and publications, please let us know.



1. Smoke alarms



2. Bellman Visit paging system



3. Mobile phones



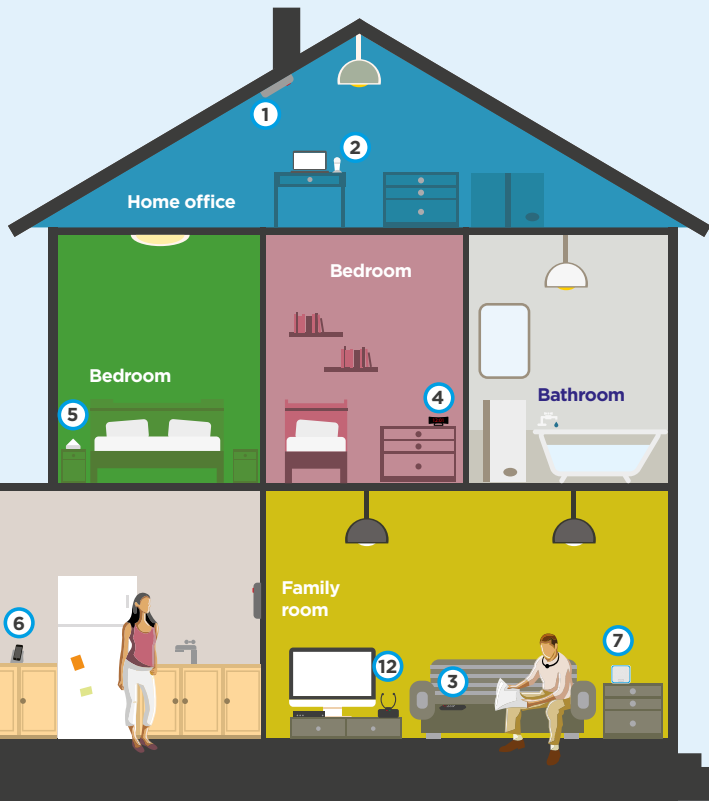
4. Alarm clocks



5. Tinnitus relaxers



6. Cordless phones



Shop with us

You can find out about these products and more at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop



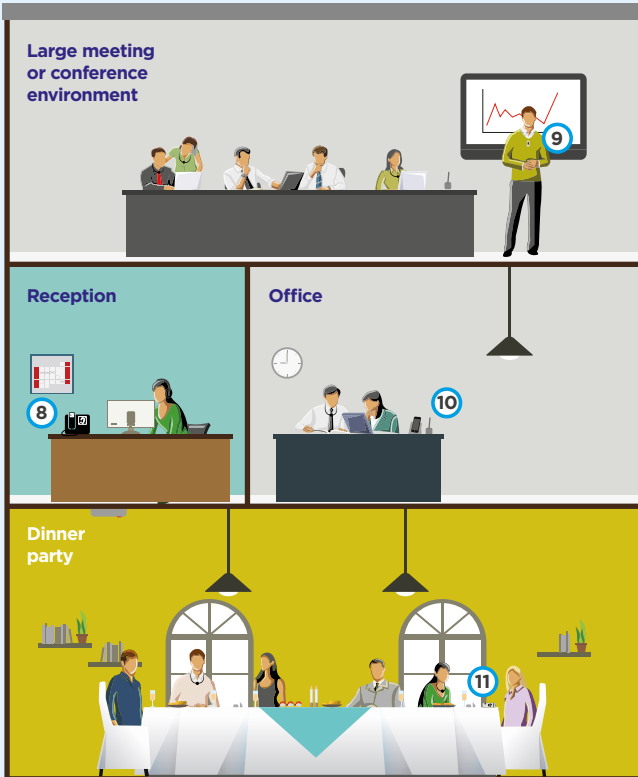
7. Doorbells



8. Hearing loops for businesses



9. Listening devices



CONVERSATION AND TV LISTENERS



10. Roger Pen



11. Sonido personal listener



12. Geemarc Opti TV listener

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We have a wide range of specially selected, tried and tested products that will make life easier for you, or someone in your family, at home, at work or when out and about. And every time you buy from us, you're making a donation to our charity.

For product recommendations to suit your hearing needs, or to request a product catalogue, contact our Customer Services Team:

☎ 03330 144 525 ✉ solutions@hearingloss.org.uk

*Excluding postage and packaging and VAT.

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

Questions about deafness, tinnitus or hearing loss?

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

Join us

 Action on Hearing Loss

 @ActionOnHearing



Published: **June 2018. Version 2.** Review date: **May 2020.**

Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of **The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.**

A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926). A1457/0618