

Are you struggling with hearing loss?



Join our free support groups

Our easy-to-access LinkUps are for individuals and their families who want to explore and overcome the challenges of living with hearing loss.

LinkUps

We know how daunting it can be when you experience changes in your hearing.

It can leave you with feelings of uncertainty, isolation and anxiety about the next steps you should take with your hearing, and who can offer you support.

That's why Hearing Link Services has created LinkUps – free support groups that have been designed by people with lived experience of hearing loss, for other people with hearing loss.

Our LinkUps are delivered in the following ways:

- **In person:** These are for groups of up to 15 people in a residential setting and usually take place over a weekend. They are known as LinkUp groups. Communication support is provided.
- **Online:** For smaller groups of up to eight people via a secure, easy-to-use online platform and known as LinkUp Online. Live captioning and speech-to-text reporting are provided.

The aim of our groups is simple.

LinkUps are a chance to explore the challenges of living with hearing loss, share solutions and find out about technology or equipment that can make life a little bit easier for you or a loved one.

Further information

To find out more about our LinkUps, visit our website: hearinglink.org/linkups/

“As a LinkUp participant, it was such a relief that I found I wasn't alone with my hearing loss worries. I didn't need to hide my disability and I found expert help and friendship in the group.” – Elizabeth, participant



Frequently asked questions

It's normal to feel apprehensive about meeting new people, even more so when you have hearing loss.

You might be thinking: Will I feel included? What will I get from taking part? Is it the right thing for me?

Below we answer some of the questions we are frequently asked to help put you at ease about joining one of our groups:



- **Who can apply for a LinkUp?**

LinkUps are for people with all levels of hearing loss. We also encourage a partner, family member or friend to join you on the journey, as we understand that hearing loss affects your close personal relationships too.

- **How long does a LinkUp last?**

A LinkUp group, delivered in person, takes place over a weekend in a residential setting, usually a hotel.

A LinkUp Online is held on Microsoft Teams, an easy-to-use and secure online platform which you can access from home. Sessions normally take place over two consecutive days, with communication support provided. Access to Microsoft platform is included for duration of programme.

- **Who delivers the course?**

Each session is led by Hearing Link Services volunteers or staff who have lived experience and

understanding of hearing loss. We cover important and useful topics such as communication strategies, lipreading and technology.

- **I worry I won't hear everything. How will I be able to keep up with what's being said?**

LinkUps are fully accessible. If you are joining a LinkUp group (in person), we provide speech-to-text-reporting (STTR) where every word that is said is typed on a large screen. We also provide a hearing loop.

For LinkUp Online, we also provide an STTR weblink which is supported by built-in captioning via the Microsoft Teams app.

A BSL interpreter can be made available on request.

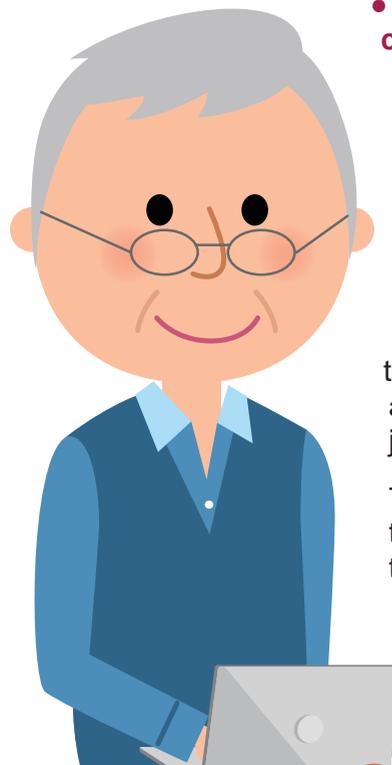
- **I am not confident using a computer, can I still apply for a LinkUp Online?**

Yes! Even if you aren't computer savvy, we will support you every step of the way through your LinkUp Online journey with us.

Before joining our group, we can offer you a 1-1 session with a member of our team.

This session lasts up to 45 minutes and they will guide you through what's involved and make sure that you've the right tools to join our group.

They will give you a chance to practise using the features of Microsoft Teams such as the captions.

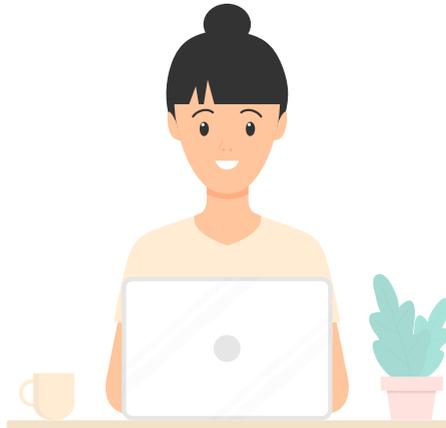


How to apply

It's easy to register your interest for one of our LinkUps – whether it's in person or online.

You can start your journey today by visiting hearinglink.org/linkups/ and completing our webform.

If you're not sure if a LinkUp is right for you, our knowledgeable Hearing Link Services team will be happy to discuss different options.



We offer a wide range of personalised hearing support services and we will guide you to the support best suited to your, or a loved one's, individual needs.

We can also signpost you to local services or organisations who may be able to help in your community.

If you have any further questions about the types of support we can offer, please contact us:

- W** hearinglink.org
- T** 01844 348111
- E** helpdesk@hearinglink.org

We will be happy to support you, or a loved one, on your hearing loss journey.

“LinkUps are a wonderful way of bringing a group of hard of hearing people, their family, and friends together. They can choose the subjects they want to discuss and are given support, lots of information and an opportunity to share experiences with others facing the same challenges as them.”

– Margaret, LinkUp volunteer



How to get in touch

To find out more about the range of services we offer and how we can help you, visit

hearinglink.org/services

Alternatively, you can contact us by:

T 01844 348111 / 18001 01844 348111 (for deaf and hard of hearing)

E helpdesk@hearinglink.org

“I love LinkUps. Having hearing loss can feel very scary, confusing and isolating and it’s so nice to meet with others in similar situations, and to share experiences and coping methods. I also learnt new information that could be really helpful to me, which hadn’t been suggested to me by my audiologist or ENT consultant. It’s just so important to be aware of all possible options and there’s really no-one better placed to give this information than others who live with hearing loss.” – Kay, participant

Hearing Link Services is part of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

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