

inTouch

News for our Hearing Dogs &
Hearing Link Services communities

ISSUE 25



“Wilbur has
opened up my
world.”

Lucy's life-changing
partnership

Page 4

PLUS

Communication
support products

Page 14

Living well with
hearing loss

Page 7

Using remote
microphones
Page 15



Martin

In this issue...

From hearing loss patient to NHS audiologist

Martin follows his heart to a new career path
Page 10

Welcome!

Thank you for reading the winter issue 2023 of *inTouch*.

We're delighted to bring you the latest news and stories of how the Charity is supporting deaf people, those living with hearing loss, and their families and friends.

This issue, we meet Lucy, who shares how her hearing dog Wilbur transformed her life.

Martin talks about his journey from hearing loss patient to NHS audiologist. We find out more about the role of Assistance Dogs UK and wish a happy retirement to Hearing Dogs co-founder Dr Bruce Fogle MBE, who is stepping down as a trustee.

Learn more about remote mics and how they can help you, and say hello to Rachel in our latest 'Meet the Team' interview.

The next issue of *inTouch* will be published in summer 2024.

Features

- 04 Lucy and Wilbur's life-changing story
- 06 Update from CEO Tracy Griffin
- 07 Living well with hearing loss
- 13 Q&A with Assistance Dogs UK
- 14 Products to support your hearing
- 16 Four things to know about Wills
- 20 All the latest fundraising news
- 25 Tributes to special dogs and people

inTouch

News for our Hearing Dogs and Hearing Link Services communities.

inTouch is accessible in BSL via the links at: hearingdogs.org.uk/intouch

If you no longer wish to receive a postal copy of *inTouch*, please contact us by emailing dataprotection@hearingdogs.org.uk



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Dr Bruce Fogle MBE retires as Hearing Dogs trustee

We say thank you to our co-founder, whose vision and hard work helped establish this Charity more than 40 years ago

Dr Bruce Fogle MBE, co-founder of Hearing Dogs, has retired as a trustee for the Charity and has been named as a vice-president.

Bruce has a long history with the Charity. He co-founded it back in 1982 with Lady (Beatrice) Wright, was elected vice chairman in 1986, and has been actively involved ever since.

As a dog lover, and a practising vet with decades of clinical experience, Bruce has an empathetic understanding of how strong the bond is between people and dogs. He also saw first-hand the incredible difference dogs can make to people's lives. It was this insight that led him and Lady (Beatrice) Wright to launch Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, as it was then known, as a three-year pilot scheme at the Crufts dog show in 1982. He has been an integral part of the Charity since then, as we have grown to make a world of difference to thousands of deaf and hard of hearing people.

Bruce says: "I am tremendously proud of all that Hearing Dogs for Deaf People has done over the past 41 years to change

the lives of people with hearing loss. When Babs and I co-founded the Charity, we knew the potential of dogs being trained to alert deaf people to important and life-saving sounds, and the difference this could make to deaf people's lives, but we could not have imagined just how many people the Charity would go on to help. "We have gone from training a small number of hearing dogs four decades ago, to now training and matching around 200 dogs each year and helping thousands of other people with hearing loss through our personalised Hearing Link Services, such as our Helpdesk and support groups.

"It is our wonderful family of over 3,000 kind volunteers and our professional and dedicated staff who have enabled the Charity to go from strength to strength.

"As I retire as a trustee, Hearing Dogs is in very good hands to continue its mission of seeing a day when no deaf person feels alone."

Christina O'Donovan-Rossa, chairman of Hearing Dogs, says: "It has been a joy to work alongside Bruce, both as a

trustee and now chair. His endless enthusiasm, boundless energy, good humour and wise counsel will be sorely missed. He is the repository of wonderful stories about the Charity, which ensures we remain steadfastly focused on our key purpose."

From everyone at Hearing Dogs, we thank Bruce for helping to change the lives of deaf people for over 40 years.

To mark Bruce's retirement and to commemorate the many wonderful things he has done to help deaf people and people with hearing loss, a tree has been planted at our southern training centre, The Grange, which we are sure volunteers and staff will enjoy for many years to come.

Dr Bruce Fogle MBE

Did you know?

- In 2004, Bruce received an MBE for services to deaf people.
- Bruce is the world's best-selling practising vet and his books have been published in over 35 languages.
- This year, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons awarded Bruce the RCVS Queen's Medal, their highest honour.
- For his services to pets, pet owners and vets, the British Small Animal Veterinary Association awarded Bruce Honorary Life Membership.

Photograph by Paul Wilkinson

“Wilbur allows me to live a happier, fuller life.”



Read more
or donate at
hearingdogs.org.uk/lucy



Lucy's life has been transformed by Wilbur

Photography by Paul Wilkinson

For a long time, Lucy felt isolated and unable to connect with people – even with those who loved her the most, her family. But her life changed when she was partnered with wonderful Wilbur, her hearing dog, who was carefully chosen to match her needs. This is her story...

My deafness came out of the blue. I was studying for my A levels, and I remember we went away for a class trip. We were sitting in a circle having a discussion and I became aware that the teacher was asking me a question and I was unable to answer because I couldn't understand or hear what they were saying.

This was just the beginning. My ears became increasingly painful, my breathing deteriorated, I had severe nosebleeds coupled with excruciating headaches, and then the cartilage in my nose collapsed. Eventually, I was diagnosed with a rare auto-immune disease called GPA (granulomatosis with polyangiitis).

The first 18 months after my diagnosis were tough. I was in and out of hospital a lot. And while the focus was on trying to manage my physical symptoms, I wasn't offered any support with my deafness or mental health. I really struggled to cope; I had gone from being a healthy happy college student, with a part-time job and an active social life, to barely leaving my home.

Feeling alone

After my diagnosis, I felt like a completely different person – like I no longer fitted in. I used to go out and enjoy spending time with my friends, but then it felt like I was watching everyone move on and I was stuck in the same place.

At my very worst points, I used to sleep a lot so there were fewer waking hours in the day, counting down the hours until bedtime. At night, when I couldn't hear and I couldn't see, the loneliness was overwhelming. I have always been close to my family, who have been so loving and supportive, but as soon as I was alone, the anxiety returned.

Everyday challenges

Hearing loss affected so much of my day-to-day life. Simple things that we all take for granted, like the sound of a doorbell or an alarm clock, I couldn't hear. I used to sleep with my phone on vibrate so I could feel my alarm going off in the morning.

Yet often that wasn't enough, and I would oversleep, missing important medical appointments. I found it difficult to relax and was always on edge.

I got to the point where I wasn't really enjoying life and wanted things to change. That's when my twin sister told me about Hearing Dogs.

A new chapter

From the moment I learned I was on the waiting list for a dog, I felt part of the Hearing Dogs family, and have done so ever since. When they contacted me to say that they'd found a match, I was so happy!

I fell in love with Wilbur straight away. I remember clearly the first time we went out for a walk on our own, and just how lovely it was to be out in nature. For years, I had missed out on so much from feeling so isolated.

I still experience anxiety, but my confidence has grown so much since Wilbur arrived. I used to feel self-conscious and vulnerable on my mobility scooter, but with Wilbur by my side, wearing his Hearing Dogs jacket, people are instantly aware of my hearing loss.

I'm no longer sat on the sidelines – I'm getting out, meeting people, and experiencing normal everyday life just like other people.

Independence

Wilbur helps me feel safe as he's there to support me in



“We're facing new challenges together and I'm growing in confidence with every step I take.”

everything I do. He's so clever! Because I know he will alert me to sounds like the doorbell, alarm clock, smoke alarm, and even FaceTime, I'm so much more relaxed. Wilbur is helping me to lead a more independent life that isn't behind closed doors. He's had such a positive impact on my mental health and we face every new challenge together.

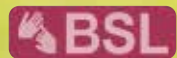
Before his arrival, I lived life in the shadows, unable to join in. Now, Wilbur brings warmth and connection every single day. He's my constant companion and is there for me whatever I'm going through.

Living again

Wilbur has opened up my world again. He's the best thing that's ever happened to me. Our bond grew and grew from the day we met, and we've been inseparable ever since. I feel like I'm truly living now and that's all because of Hearing Dogs and the incredible work they do.



Tracy Griffin reflects on six months in post



Our chief executive shares her learnings, highlights and what's planned for the Charity in the months ahead

My first six months has been first and foremost a privilege, and really enjoyable, getting to know the Charity: our work and our people.

It's been a mixture of listening to trustees, staff, volunteers, and service users, learning more about where we have come from, where we are now and opinions on where our opportunities and challenges are.

I have also met with several other assistance and hearing loss charities to better understand their work and how we compare and complement. There is a warmth and passion at Hearing Dogs, which stands out in every conversation.

There have been many highlights, but two key ones stand out. I attended a Hearing Information Day in Yorkshire and listened to a presentation from a brilliant Hearing Link Services volunteer, Emmanuelle, who was advising people on how to get the most out of an audiology appointment.

Emmanuelle has been profoundly deaf all of her life and talked so passionately about the subject and how best to work with audiologists and taking control of your hearing loss.

A number of the participants spoke to her afterwards and explained that in their years of living with hearing loss, they had learned so much from the session that would make a real difference to their lives.

A second highlight, was a day I spent also in Yorkshire with Natalie, a partnership instructor. We visited three deaf partners with hearing dogs.

It struck me how much more hearing dogs are offering to people than the sound and support work they do, in terms of their wellbeing and mental health.

We met one deaf partner who had worked with his dog for a month. His face lit up when he talked about the difference it had made to his life by opening up conversations, feeling part of his workplace and better able to interact with his colleagues.

What also stood out to me was the breadth and depth of the work of the partnership instructors in the support they offer to our deaf partners, and in Natalie's case, how brilliant she is at her job.

In the months ahead, I hope to continue to meet people and to continue learning about our fantastic charity.

We will also begin a six-month strategic review of our work to bring clarity over our

“The passion our service users, volunteers, staff and trustees have for Hearing Dogs is incredible”

ambitions across Hearing Loss Services and our canine operations, which is a topic that has come up a lot during discussions.

It is important to me that everyone is able to contribute to this process, and we will ensure this is the case and that regular ways of feeding back, become common practice.

We have some great stories to tell about the impact of our work on peoples' lives. I'm looking forward to us shouting more loudly about these stories and raising the profile of Hearing Dogs in our communities.

Photograph by Alexandra Agass



We can help you to live well with hearing loss

Learn more about the different ways you can access hearing support from our Charity

Hearing Dogs provides a wide range of personalised hearing support services that you can access if you are affected by hearing loss.

No matter how long you've been living

with deafness – whether you're newly diagnosed or been living with hearing loss for many years – our peer support network of volunteers and knowledgeable staff are here to help.

We can provide tailored support for

you, and also to your family, friends and colleagues. By working together we'll find out more about how hearing loss affects your life and which of our services may be suitable for your needs. Here's a quick guide to all the ways we can help.

Getting in touch

Taking the first step in acknowledging your hearing loss, or admitting you need more support, can be daunting. We understand you may feel apprehensive, but our friendly team is here to support you. Here's how you can connect with us:



Ask our Helpdesk
W: hearinglink.org/ask
E: helpdesk@hearinglink.org
T: 01844 348111



Start a Live Chat
Speak to one of our team via our live chat bubble at hearinglink.org



Referral
Ask your audiologist or support worker to make a referral to our services.

We will find the support that's right for you

Once we have processed your enquiry or referral, we will arrange to find out more about the problems you've been experiencing. We will identify a pathway for you to manage the challenges you face and suggest one or more of our services to support you.



Peer support
Our volunteers answer your Helpdesk questions and offer 1-1 support online or in-person.



Support groups
Join a group and share solutions with others facing the same challenges as you.



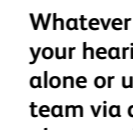
Hearing dogs
We provide life-changing hearing dogs that can alert you to important sounds.



In your community
We run events in the community to connect people and share information.



Helpful Hours
Free 60-minute sessions offering help and advice on the most important hearing loss topics.



Whatever help or support you need for your hearing loss please don't feel alone or unsure. Contact our team via any of the methods above and we can help.

Contact our Helpdesk team
Photograph by Paul Wilkinson



Helpful Hours sessions

Our free sessions are designed for anyone living with hearing loss and their families and friends



We've had great feedback on our Helpful Hours



Our sessions have been held online and in-person

It covers five key elements: preparing for your appointment, planning your appointment, what to expect, choices to make, and post appointment. Following the session, we provide information sheets, which summarise the topics discussed, and offer additional information and links to further resources.

To make the sessions accessible to those taking part, there are speech-to-text reporting (live captions) displayed on the presenting screen and there's also in-built captions available via Microsoft Teams.

Sylvia, who helped to design the first session, said: "Every person with hearing loss has experience of audiology appointments, but to get the best out of them requires an insight that many of us do not have. Helpful Hours addresses all aspects of an appointment. It provides attendees with a valuable tool and the confidence to use it."

Emmanuelle, a Helpful Hours volunteer, said: "I want to give individuals the tools to understand their hearing loss. I want to help people to take ownership of their condition; to embrace it and live fully."

The feedback on Helpful Hours so far has been very positive. One attendee said: "I thought it was a very helpful hour. It was presented really well and the use of personal experiences and examples was great."

To find out more about this service, or to book a free place, visit: hearinglink.org/helpfulhours

"I want to help people to take ownership of their condition; to embrace it and live fully."



2024 webinars – book your free place!

We would love you to join a Helpful Hour in 2024!

"How to get the most from your audiology appointment" will be available to join from the comfort of your own home, on the following dates:

- Thursday 18 January, 4pm–5pm
- Friday 23 February, 3pm–4pm
- Thursday 14 March, 12pm–1pm

Please note that the content is the same for each session, so choose the date that suits you best.

Participants are encouraged to join sessions using desktop or laptop computer to ensure full functionality is available.



Community events are a great social opportunity



Our volunteers are there to provide support



Our hearing dogs can enjoy different activities with their deaf partners

Don't miss out on attending a Community Day

Our community team has had a great time out and about meeting our deaf partners, their wonderful hearing dogs and members of the public this year.

Community Days for our partnerships are fun and enjoyable days hosted specifically for people with hearing dogs and their families, but at our Hearing Loss Community Days we open our doors to members of the public who are interested in finding out more about our services.

These events all provide great social opportunities, including a chance to take part in a local dog walk or meet one of our Hearing Link Services volunteers.

If you would like to join one of our Community Days, we'd love for you to get in touch. If you are a hearing dog applicant, please contact your support advisor. Existing partners can find out more from their partnership instructor. For all other enquiries visit hearinglink.org/hlcommunitydays to book your free place.

Hearing Loss Community Days

- 16 January – Reading, Berkshire
- 14 February – Edinburgh, Scotland
- 23 February – Chelmsford, Essex
- 23 February – Chepstow, Wales
- 4 March – Harpenden, Hertfordshire
- 15 March – Bournemouth, Dorset
- 17 March – Gateshead, Tyne and Wear



Hearing Support Sessions open in new locations across UK

We have increased the number of drop in sessions that provide information about hearing loss.

Our Hearing Support Sessions are designed for people with hearing loss who want to talk in confidence to someone who understands what it's like to live with changes in your hearing.

They are held monthly in communities across the UK and are led by our network of peer support volunteers.

Until now, our sessions have been taking place at Mycenae House, London, and Lauriston audiology department, Edinburgh. We're delighted to be able to add two more drop-in sessions to our services calendar at Worcestershire Royal Hospital and Drumbrae Library in Edinburgh.



Drop in to a local session

We hope to add even more locations in due course. So if there's a community venue near you that might be suitable, please let us know. Keep an eye on hearinglink.org/hearing-support for updates on this service.

Nicholas Orpin, service delivery manager for Hearing Link Services, says: "We are really pleased to be able to bring this service to Worcester and an additional location in Edinburgh."

"Hearing loss affects one in five of the adult population and yet it takes 10 years, on average, for someone to take the first steps in looking for advice and support.

"People can talk to our experienced, friendly volunteers about any aspect of managing hearing loss, and if we don't have the answer to hand, we have a dedicated team of advisors and personalised services that can also help."



Martin has taken a new path in his professional career

From hearing loss patient to NHS audiologist

Imagine if your audiologist had lived experience of hearing loss. What if they could understand its challenges and just “got” what you were saying when you expressed your concerns. Hearing Link Services volunteer and long-term audiology patient Martin is exactly that person. Four years ago, he made the brave decision to switch careers to become a qualified audiologist. Here is his story...

Martin has been a hearing aid user for 43 years. At the age of five, he was diagnosed with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss after his parents noticed a delay in his speech.

Living with hearing loss meant Martin always had to work harder than his hearing peers to make sure he could understand conversations. This left him tired, but he adapted by using different communication tactics and relaxation techniques to help make things easier.

The advancements of digital hearing technology, such as bluetooth hearing aids, made a huge difference to Martin's daily life. He switched from analogue to digital hearing aids in the late 2000s. But it took him around seven years to fully adapt. The bluetooth-enabled functionality allowed him to connect his hearing aids to his smartphone, which helped with phone calls and listening to music.

Change of direction

In 2019, after 23 years of working in an NHS finance department, and a further three years supporting people with hearing loss at the Northern NHS Trust as a sensory support worker, Martin started to get itchy feet.

He loved both of these roles, but when he spotted a job advertisement for a trainee associate audiologist with South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, he knew immediately it was the job for him.

He trained on the job, learning from fellow clinicians and gaining the all-important experience of working directly with patients.

To complete his journey to being a fully qualified audiologist, Martin completed a formal qualification. He attended Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, to study for a foundation degree in Hearing Aid Audiology and followed this up with a BSc top-up degree in Audiology from the Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

Helping others

By the end of 2022, Martin was a fully qualified audiologist practising in the Ulster Hospital just outside of Belfast.

The road from patient to audiologist has

“I understand what it’s like to be a patient and I treat every patient as if it was me in that chair.”



been a remarkable one and Martin is delighted with his new career path.

He says: “As a hearing aid wearer making the transition from patient to audiologist was quite an overwhelming experience. When I was a patient, before I changed career, I was always wondering what the audiologist was doing. Now, when I’m working, I understand what it’s like to be a patient and I treat every patient as if it was me in that chair.”

“I love being an audiologist because I can pass on my own experiences, but only when it is required. Every day is different in audiology and every interaction with your patient is special and different.

“We as audiologists do not always get it right and it can take a few visits to get the hearing device settings right. It has made me realise that the job of an audiologist is a lot harder than it looks when you’re a patient. Issuing hearing aids, holding audiology clinics, hearing aid repairs, reassessing patients, and assisting ENT clinics are just some of the areas I’m involved in. Some of my patients have other complex needs such as dementia or learning difficulties, which adds another layer of complexity to their requirements.

“No two people with hearing loss have the same outcome, so it’s a role where you need to be very adaptable and flexible so the care provided matches the needs of the person you’re helping.”

Lived experience

Away from his professional career, Martin was also able to use his lived experience of hearing loss to support others.

He has been one of our valuable peer support volunteers at Hearing Link Services for six years. His volunteer roles include facilitating LinkUp support groups in Northern Ireland, and he has continued to fulfil this role since qualifying as

“I love working with my patients, sharing my own lived experience of hearing loss and trying, ultimately, to make a positive difference in their lives.”

an audiologist. Martin has also given numerous talks and supported events for the Charity. He was also involved in our Connect Hear NI project that sought to help communities across the country.

All in all, Martin has made a crucial impact in and out of the workplace by using his own personal experiences to support others with their individual hearing loss journeys.

No looking back

Martin has excelled in his new working role and is delighted to have made a successful transition from patient to working audiologist.

He says: “I love interacting with patients and trying to improve their hearing, which can make such a difference to their lives.

“Although it was a step-change for me, I’m glad I decided to switch careers. I love working with my patients, sharing my own lived experience of hearing loss and trying, ultimately, to make a positive difference in their lives. It’s very rewarding for me.”



All aboard!



Logan ready for his adventure



Day out at Bodnant Gardens

Access on the right track

Deaf partner challenges tour operator over cancelled trip

A dream rail journey almost ended in an emergency stop for one of our deaf partners when her booking was unexpectedly cancelled.

Veronica and her hearing dog Logan were excited to be part of a long-awaited trip in a first class dining rail service to Wales.

However, before their ticket was even stamped, UK Railtours, who provide the trip, said that Logan wouldn't be able to join Veronica due to limited space, health and safety concerns and a staff member's allergy to dogs.

Bitterly disappointed, Veronica emailed a complaint to UK Railtours explaining how they were required to make reasonable adjustments to enable them both to go on the journey.

With help from Assistance Dogs UK and Hearing Dogs director of Hearing Loss Services, Angie Southcott, a solution was found.

Veronica said: "Not only did they arrange for us to sit at a larger table, so that Logan had room to keep out of the way, but they also revised their assistance dog policy within 24 hours, enabling anyone with an assistance dog to book with them in future."

The trip was a triumph, with Logan admirably demonstrating his high level of hearing dog training.

Veronica said: "Logan was a true ambassador for all assistance dogs. He made the journey both ways lying quietly under the table for three hours."

"We had a nice wet walk round Bodnant Gardens in drenching rain. He was pleased I took his ruff and tumble drying coat with me, so he could dry off and look professional when we boarded the train to go home."

"The staff and passengers were so impressed with his impeccable

behaviour and training, and I was so proud of my very special little man."

Angie Southcott was delighted that the issue with the provider could be resolved. She said: "I would love to be able to say that whenever we encounter access issues, we can resolve them, but sadly this isn't always the case."

"That's why when we are able to speak to the right people in a business and help them to understand the situation, so they can welcome people with assistance dogs, it's so rewarding."

"I am thrilled to have been able to work with Veronica and the provider to make this exciting excursion possible and I'm sure they have made a positive impression on those who witnessed the pair in action."

UK Railtours, who organised the trip, said: "As a small business, every day is a learning day! We're very glad we were able to welcome Veronica and Logan onboard our tour, and look forward to welcoming more assistance dogs onboard in future."

"We're also extremely grateful to Angie and Assistance Dogs UK for their guidance in helping us shape our policies to be as welcoming as possible for everyone."

Reporting access issues

Our charity has a number of guides, that can help our partnerships to navigate access issues if they occur, as well as template letters and support materials.

If you are requiring assistance, please contact your partnership instructor in the first instance.



Q&A with Assistance Dogs UK

Vicky Worthington talks about the purpose and charitable objectives of the organisation and its plans for the future

What is Assistance Dogs UK, and what's your role?

My name is Vicky Worthington, I have been with Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) for just over three years. I started as the development manager and more recently as the Charity's executive director. ADUK serves as the umbrella body for accredited assistance dog organisations. In addition to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, we have 11 other member organisations, all of which have undergone a rigorous accreditation process through Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or the International Guide Dogs Federation (IGDF). We also work with six organisations that are working toward achieving the same accreditation as our members. You can find a list of our members and candidates on our website [assistedogs.org.uk/members](https://www.assistedogs.org.uk/members)

What's the purpose of ADUK and what are its goals?

ADUK has three charitable objectives:

1. To raise awareness of assistance dogs, and advocate for the needs and rights of those who rely on them
2. To improve access through educational initiatives
3. To facilitate collaboration among our members, to shape and share best practices in the industry.

ADUK was established in 1995 and was initially run entirely by a board of volunteers, all of whom come from the assistance dog industry. In 2020, a generous donation enabled the Charity to employ its first member of staff, which meant that ADUK could enhance the way it worked with members. Since then, we've widened our reach and support for members and have a team of three employees and a dynamic board,



Vicky

including Angie Southcott, director of Hearing Loss Services at Hearing Dogs. In the coming years, ADUK will continue to expand its educational work with the goal of reaching more service providers and ensuring they understand their legal obligations to individuals with assistance dogs. Ultimately, we hope to engage the UK Government in strengthening the legal framework related to this issue.

Which organisations are members of ADUK?

Our members are all charities, though they vary greatly in size and the individuals they support. We've had a recent rise in members that are training autism assistance dogs, which is great as we have seen the demand for these increase substantially over the past three years. We have also welcomed new members who specialise in training assistance dogs for individuals with PTSD and a range of psychiatric conditions. There is also an increase in members working in partnership with individuals to train their own pet dogs.

How does ADUK work with its member organisations?

At ADUK, we view all the people

working and volunteering at our member organisations as the experts in the industry. Our role is to facilitate opportunities for them to pool their knowledge and expertise, resulting in the development of ADUK guidance, best practices, and educational resources. We also ensure that staff and volunteers from our membership have the space and opportunities to collaborate and learn from one another.

What professional standards does ADUK adhere to?

While ADUK is not an accrediting or regulatory body, all our members adhere to the high standards set by either ADI or IGDF. Regardless of the diverse models and dog breeds our members work with, they all share a commitment to upholding standards that benefit assistance dogs and the individuals who rely on them.

What's on the horizon?

ADUK is currently experiencing an exciting period of growth and exploration as we seek new ways to support our members and foster industry collaboration. We have recently welcomed a learning and education co-ordinator to our small team, whose work will significantly impact on how we can educate service providers on access and inclusion. Next year, we will be launching our ADUK Ambassador Programme, which will involve recruiting and supporting a group of assistance dog partnerships from our membership to represent us in interactions with the press and at events.



To access new resources from ADUK, visit: [assistedogs.org.uk](https://www.assistedogs.org.uk)

Making the invisible a little more visible

Managing hearing loss in public places, work or social situations can be challenging. Here are some products that may help

If you are deaf or live with hearing loss, you will know it is an invisible disability for 1 in 5 of the UK's population, and the chance of acquiring it increases with age.

Many people state that because hearing loss is hidden to others, it can cause a lot of communication challenges when out and about.

The invisibility of hearing loss, coupled with noisy environments, can lead to frustration and anxiety. While communication tactics and strategies can help, there are other solutions you can consider to support your hearing and communication.

The Hearing Dogs online shop is here to help! We offer visible and discreet communication cards, lanyards and wristbands that have been carefully designed to alert others to your hearing level and make the invisible a little more visible.

Each of these solutions offers a choice of messaging depending on your communication preference. Messaging options include:

- "I have a hearing loss"
- "I am a lipreader"
- "I am deaf"

Here are the different types of products explained.

Lanyards

Our three colourful lanyards are a visible way to share your hearing level. Each individual fabric lanyard has bold lettering featuring your chosen message and a standard metal clip that allows you to display your chosen identification or communication card. These can be



Awareness products are helpful in social situations

worn for work, socialising or attending appointments. See the range here: hearinglink.org/lanyards



Communication cards

We have communication cards in all shapes and sizes depending on your preference and individual needs.

Our selection includes credit-card sized cards (featuring your chosen message) and larger print cards.

There is also a tent card which can be displayed on your desk, a reception area or similar. This will alert others to your hearing level.

And if you are planning a visit to hospital, or have a relative in a care home who needs to alert others to their hearing; the largest card in our range can be the perfect companion.

The hospital inpatient card is large print

and attention grabbing. See more at: hearinglink.org/cards

Wristbands

If you prefer a more discreet option, our range of wristbands might be your thing.

The same three messages mentioned earlier can be found on our wristbands. One size fits all. Find out more at: hearinglink.org/wristbands



Good to know!

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower has been created to act as a discreet indicator that the person wearing it (or someone in their company) has a hidden disability. It is recognised by major retailers and travel providers.

By wearing the Sunflower, whether it's a card, lanyard or pin badge you're just letting everyone know that you might need extra help, understanding, or just more time. Find out more at: hdsunflower.com

Technology

Corner



A remote microphone can prove extremely useful in lots of everyday situations. It can help make communication and following speech easier. We explain how they can help

Hearing aids are becoming ever smarter and more capable, however users will often still struggle in noisy environments to hear someone's voice over a long distance. Remote mics (microphones) could complement your hearing aids and help in many situations.

A remote mic is a small device which can be worn by the person you want to hear, or placed near to a sound source you want to listen to. The mic picks up the sound and transmits it wirelessly to your hearing aids.

There are different types of remote

mics, depending on your hearing aids and needs.

Some hearing aids have built-in receivers that connect directly to the mic, while others require an external receiver that can be worn around your neck or attached to your hearing aids. Some mics are designed for use with one person, while others can support group conversations.

One example of a remote mic is the Roger Partner Mic from Phonak. This device is worn by the speaker as a lapel mic. It has a range of up to 25 metres and a battery life of around six hours.

It is compatible with Phonak hearing aids that have RogerDirect technology, which allows them to receive the signal wirelessly from the microphone.

Other manufacturers offer similar devices that work with their hearing aids, such as the ConnectClip from Oticon, Micro Mic from ReSound, and the Remote Microphone + from Starkey.

You will need to make enquiries into which devices work with your hearing aids and meet your individual needs. Below are some situations when a remote mic could be useful.

Work meetings and customer service

Whether you work in an open plan space, shop, in customers' homes, or even in a home office, it can be helpful to use a remote mic to support effective communication. It's good practice to share with people what you need from them to communicate effectively. Asking your colleague or customer to wear a remote mic, which is easy to wear, can improve the communication between you.

If you're attending a team meeting and don't have access to a device designed for group conversation, you could ask the meeting lead to wear the mic, and pass the mic between speakers. Depending on your personal needs, some people benefit from wearing a remote mic when giving presentations or talks to help monitor their own speech and adjust volume as needed.



Coffee shops and restaurants

Hearing can be difficult in coffee shops and restaurants due to the background noise. It can be hard to hear what your friend is saying, even if they're sitting close to you. A remote mic can help cut through the background noise and focus on their voice by picking it up and streaming it directly into your hearing aids.



Taking part in a fitness class

Another situation where hearing can be challenging is when you are participating in a fitness class or group workout. It may not always be possible to face your instructor as they move around the class, or further away from you, making it harder to hear them. There may also be noise from music playing and other environmental noise to contend with. You can ask the instructor to wear the mic, so their voice is streamed to your hearing aids, filtering out the background noise and helping you stay in sync with their instructions.



Looking after a baby

If you are out for a walk with a baby or young child in a pram or carrier you may not always be able to see or hear them particularly well, especially if there is traffic noise and other environmental sounds. It may help to carefully place the mic inside the pram or baby carrier, so their voice and any noises such as crying are streamed directly to your hearing aids.



Classes or lectures

If you attend classes where you need to listen to a teacher, it can prove difficult due to the room layout and acoustics. You may not always be able to sit close enough to hear. Sometimes the lecturer may face away from you, and there may be other background noise. Ask the speaker to wear a mic to minimise the impact of their distance. You could also request that they repeat or summarise questions from other students so you can better follow the flow of the presentation.



If you're interested in getting a remote mic for your hearing aids, you should first research what would work best with your device to suit your needs and lifestyle. It never hurts getting more than one opinion, but it's best to try before you buy, as your experience may differ from other people's. You can also contact our Helpdesk for support – hearinglink.org/ask



Four important things to know about leaving a gift in your Will

Choosing to leave a gift to charity in your Will is an incredibly personal decision, but it can be easier than you might think

1. Over half of our services are funded by gifts in Wills

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People believes that no deaf person should feel alone. This is why we train highly-skilled hearing dogs and offer a wide range of personalised hearing support services for deaf people and those living with hearing loss.

Highly trained hearing dogs alert their deaf partners to important and life-saving sounds, such as the smoke alarm, alarm clocks, carbon monoxide alarms and even a baby's cry. But they also do so much more.

Many deaf people feel lonely and isolated: cut off from the world around them. The many barriers they have to face in their daily lives can reduce confidence, independence, safety, and take a real toll on their mental and physical wellbeing. The love, support and companionship of a hearing dog can be transformative, allowing deaf people to lead the lives they deserve.

This extraordinary support coupled with our wide range of personalised services means we can support deaf people and their families to manage the challenges of hearing loss.

Today, demand for hearing dogs is great and the number of people experiencing hearing loss is rising. We rely on donations to continue training these amazing dogs and to provide our services, such as our Helpdesk and support groups. Over half of our donations come from gifts in Wills, through the kindness of people like you.

2. Leaving a gift can be easier than you might think

Leaving a gift in your Will to transform the lives of deaf people is an incredibly personal decision. But Wills can also be surprisingly quick and simple to organise.

First, you'll need to make a list of everything you own, including property and investments, and decide who to name as executors. These are the people who will make sure your wishes are carried out. Then you'll decide who to include. Naturally many people will put their loved

ones first, and then consider leaving a gift to charity. For example, when considering leaving a gift to Hearing Dogs, some people choose to leave a percentage of their estate.

You would then use a solicitor or trusted Will-writing service to write your Will so you can be sure everything is properly covered. If you already have a Will, you can talk to your solicitor about updating it to leave a gift to charity if you would like to, or you can complete a codicil (which allows you to make amendments without having to completely re-write your Will) and store it with your Will.

There is lots of useful information and guidance on how to leave a gift in a Will on our website at hearingdogs.org.uk/legacies

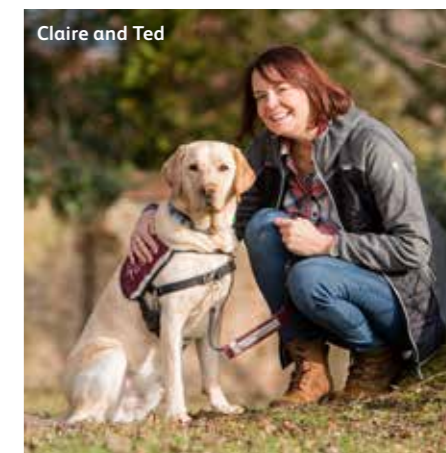
3. You will transform deaf people's lives

As over half our services are funded by gifts in Wills, there are currently hundreds of deaf people across the UK whose lives have been completely transformed thanks to this kindest of gifts.

This includes people like Claire (pictured above). Claire is partnered with hearing dog Ted. Claire said: "When I learned that my hearing dog had been funded by a gift in a Will I was completely stunned and very, very grateful. Ted helps the whole family feel safe – my husband, who is also deaf, and our son, Max.

"There's a special bond you have with a hearing dog. Ted's with me from the moment I wake up, making me aware of things around me. And while we're asleep, I have peace of mind that Ted will alert us to the fire alarm, or any other danger that may occur.

"I'm not the most confident person, but when you have a hidden disability like deafness, having a hearing dog like Ted gives you the confidence to go out, hold your head up high and be you. When people see Ted in his jacket they understand that I'm deaf without me having to explain; as long as he's there beside me, he acts as a reminder. It's wonderful really, that there are people who



care so much that they've chosen to leave money to Hearing Dogs. Without gifts of this kind, it would be much more difficult to train dogs to help people like me – and for that I am eternally grateful."

4. You can write or update your Will for free

Hearing dogs works closely with Farewill to offer a free online and telephone Will-writing service. Farewill are the UK's largest online Will-writing specialists and winners of the National Will Writing Firm of the year 2019, 2020 and 2021.

With their expert help, you can quickly and securely write your Will in the comfort of your own home, then have it checked by a specialist to make sure all your wishes are clear – all for free. You will then need to print and sign it in front of two witnesses to make it legally binding.

We recognise that providing for your family, friends and loved ones will always come first. If you have benefitted from our hearing dogs or Hearing Link Services, there is no obligation to leave a gift in your Will. But if you do choose to remember us, thank you.' Your gift will help us towards our goal of a time where no deaf person feels alone.

If you would like more information on leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Zoe Cox on 01844 348130, email legacies@hearingdogs.org.uk, or visit hearingdogs.org.uk/legacies



"I wanted to be able to give something back to the wonderful organisation who transformed my life. To ensure they are there to support more deaf people and their families in the future, I will be remembering Hearing Dogs in my Will. The Charity can only provide its core services, thanks to the generosity of its supporters who donate monthly, sponsor a puppy or leave a gift in their Will."

Ronnie

Pets at Home raises £650,000 for Hearing Dogs

For the second year, Pets at Home kindly chose Hearing Dogs as the beneficiary of their Summer Fundraiser



Pets at Home raised an extraordinary amount for Hearing Dogs through its Summer Fundraiser 2023

Pets at Home has raised a whopping £650,000 for Hearing Dogs, having chosen the Charity as the beneficiary of their Summer Fundraiser for a second year running.

This brings the total raised for the Charity by the national pet retailer over the last two years to over £1 million.

All the money raised from the Summer Fundraiser 2023, which took place in July, will help to train hearing dog puppies that will go on to change deaf people's lives.

Every area of the business got involved – from all Pets at Home stores, Groom Rooms, and the Pets at Home Veterinary Group, to their distribution centres and offices – all raising funds to support the training of life-changing hearing dogs.

The Pets at Home team wore Hearing Dogs branded t-shirts in stores, sold Hearing Dogs merchandise and

encouraged customers to make donations at the till – all to help change the lives of deaf people and people with hearing loss.

Steve Heyes, director of communications and fundraising for Hearing Dogs, said: "We are absolutely blown away that £650,000 has been raised in this year's Summer Fundraiser! A huge thank you goes out to all Pets at Home colleagues and customers – you've all done something incredible and are directly helping change the lives of deaf people through our clever dogs."

"Our relationship with Pets at Home, a huge national retailer, not only helps to fund the training of hearing dog puppies, but it also provides us with an amazing opportunity to raise awareness of Hearing Dogs with a big, new audience, which is so valuable to the Charity."

"Pets at Home colleagues truly went above and beyond to raise money to help

deaf people leave loneliness behind and reconnect with life. They fundraised in stores, sold handmade items, did cycling challenges, car washes, dress up days, and more. It was all brilliant and we were so impressed by how hard everyone worked to raise money and awareness for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People."

Many of Hearing Dogs' volunteers and staff played a significant role in the success of the Summer Fundraiser this year. They visited over 220 stores across the UK with dogs-in-training, shared stories and information with Pets at Home colleagues and customers and they took the time to say thank you to colleagues in store for everything they were doing.

This support was crucial, so on behalf of the Charity, a big thank you to everyone who got involved. If you visited a store during July and donated to the Summer Fundraiser, a huge thank you to you too.

Photograph by Alexandra Agass

Meet Rachel

Community Fundraising Manager – East Anglia

Before joining Hearing Dogs, I worked as an event manager for another charity and I really enjoyed helping to make a difference. When the role of community fundraising manager (CFM) for East Anglia came up at this charity – being an animal lover – I couldn't think of anything better than dogs helping to change people's lives. So, it was an easy decision for me.

Fast forward, and I've worked at Hearing Dogs for just over 10 years, and I still love my job!

Animal lover

I'm based remotely in a lovely village in Suffolk, where I live with my partner Paul and elderly cat, Frank. I have two stepsons – Andrew and James – who both live in Brighton with their girlfriends. They are in a band (lead singer and drummer) that has toured the world and even played at Madison Square Garden. We try to see them at gigs whenever we can, but sadly I didn't make it to that one!

Over the years I've had many pets and animals in my life including cats, dogs, rabbits, a donkey and a very beautiful Arabian horse – Majestic – who I (flat) raced for a couple of years. When he retired from racing we took part in shows and long-distance riding. I was his keeper for 15 years before he sadly had to be put to sleep. To keep my hand in on the equine side I look after my friend's two horses when she goes away.

Outside of my work life I love reading, gardening and wildlife. I predominantly garden to encourage wildlife (a euphemism for an untidy garden). We have a "lockdown" pond (created during the COVID pandemic in 2020) and do lots to encourage hedgehogs to visit.

"I really enjoy working with our supporters and volunteers – their generosity with their time, their energy and enthusiasm is very humbling."



Rachel works as a Community Fundraising Manager

We also have a massive bee and bug 'bed and breakfast', made out of an old bookcase. New for this year is a swift bird box.

Varied role

At work, my CFM role means I'm a jack-of-all-trades! I work with local volunteers, supporters, groups, corporates and many others with the main purpose of raising funds and awareness for the Charity.

One of the ways the community fundraising team do this is to offer talks to explain how we help people with hearing loss through the placement of our highly-trained hearing dogs and our wide range of personalised support provided through our Hearing Link Services. Of course, we also take the opportunity to let them know how they can support our work through fundraising events such as our Great British Dog Walks and challenge activities like the London Marathon!

It's fair to say there is no typical day in this role! Some days I might be helping at a collection or event with some of our amazing volunteers or meeting new partnerships at one of our Community Days. Other days, I might have a combination of online meetings, or work on projects or events the community fundraising team is involved in, to proactively fundraise for the Charity. Then there's always the dreaded but necessary admin!

To request a speaker, visit: hearingdogs.org.uk/talk

Fabulous ambassadors

We're lucky at Hearing Dogs to have a network of fabulous volunteer speakers across the UK who regularly give talks to youth groups, schools and adult groups. We're always looking for speakers and new groups to speak to, so please get in touch if you think you could help.

Hearing Dogs also has a nifty online system for requesting talks which makes it much easier for everyone involved to request a speaker.

I really enjoy working with our supporters and volunteers – their generosity with their time, their energy and enthusiasm is very humbling. It's also a real privilege to get to know someone before they're partnered with their hearing dog and then seeing first-hand the difference it makes to their life both emotionally, practically and to their immediate family. It really is highly motivating for me in the job that I do.

Paws for Cake



Could you Paws for Cake? Join our newest fundraising challenge

If you're looking for a fundraiser that's a piece of cake – then look no further than holding a Paws for Cake event!

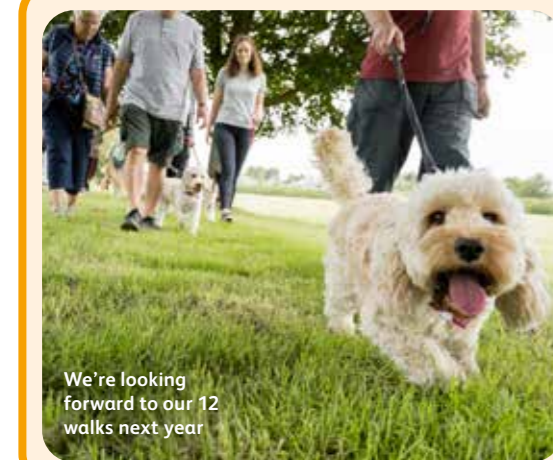
Our newest challenge is an opportunity to channel your inner Paul Hollywood or Prue Leith to raise vital funds in support of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Paws for Cake can be a tea party, coffee afternoon, or social event where you sell your delicious treats in exchange for some "dough"! It couldn't be simpler to take part. All you need to do is visit hearingdogs.org.uk/cake and fill out our

form to register your baking extravaganza and download your exclusive Paws for Cake fundraising pack.

You'll receive hints and tips, fundraising help and printable decorations to add some extra sprinkles to your event. So, get out those baking bowls, flour and icing, and get ready to whip up some brilliant bakes for Hearing Dogs.

Every slice sold will help us to train our life-changing hearing dogs and provide our wide range of hearing support services for deaf and hard of hearing people.



We're looking forward to our 12 walks next year

The Great British Dog Walk is back

After a break in 2023, The Great British Dog Walk (GBDW) is returning in the spring of 2024 (March – May) with walks taking place across Great Britain.

All walks will be confirmed soon, so make sure you visit our website to find one near you.

There'll be a return to some established walk venues and some fresh venues added into the mix. Just like in previous years, all of the walks will have two routes available: a shorter, family friendly route as

well as a long, more challenging one. Plus there'll be opportunities to meet some hearing dogs, take part in "have-a-go" agility, prize raffle and learn more about our services.

The Great British Dog Walk is a great day out and we are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone back to these exciting events. Tickets are £10 per adult (£12 on the day). Children under 16 and dogs can take part for free.

Find out more at hearingdogs.org.uk

The 28 Challenge fundraiser returns for 2024

After a fabulous February of fundraising in 2023, The 28 Challenge is back – and we hope you can help us make it bigger and better than ever before.

- Here's how The 28 Challenge works:
- Choose a fun challenge that involves the number 28 to start at any point during the month of February. You can bake and sell 28 cakes, hula-hoop for 28 days in-a-row, or even knit a 28ft scarf! The possibilities are endless – be as creative as you like!
 - Sign up at hearingdogs.org.uk/28challenge and download your

free fundraising pack.

- When you sign up, you'll also receive a free 28 Challenge tracker card!
- Set up your fundraising page on JustGiving to share on social media.
- And finally, tell your family and friends that you're doing The 28 Challenge and ask them if they will sponsor you.

By taking part, you'll be helping deaf people, and those living with hearing loss, to leave loneliness behind and reconnect with life.

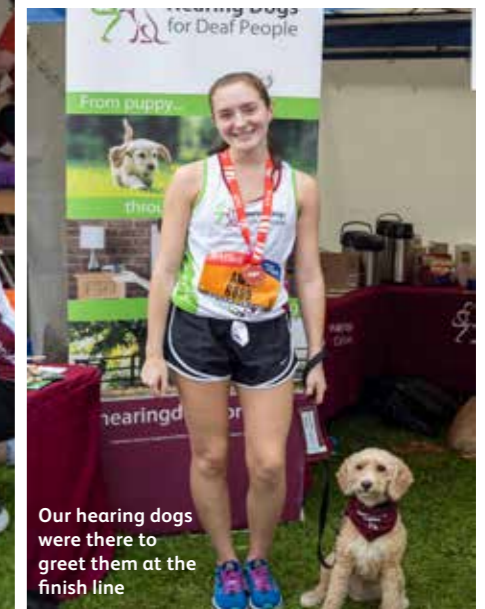


Find a challenge to suit you at: hearingdogs.org.uk/events

Great North rain!



Our fabulous challengers



Our hearing dogs were there to greet them at the finish line

Despite very high temperatures, torrential rain and thunderstorms, The Great North Run was a great success!

Twenty-two runners, of all abilities, set off from Newcastle and all arrived safely in South Shields.

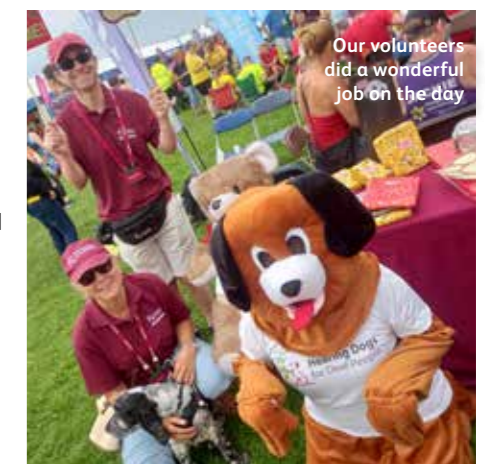
There, they were warmly welcomed by our fabulous volunteers, who greeted them with goody bags and warm refreshments. The volunteers also attracted visitors to their stand with a tombola stall, a "Guess the Name of the Bear" competition, and a rather large dog that seemed to spend a lot of time stood on two legs. Also there to greet each runner were some canine friends.

On a day when the weather captured many a headline, Hearing Dogs could be spotted on the BBC coverage of the event with a feature on Derek, one of our runners.

Buoyed by crowds along the route offering water, jelly babies, and orange segments, our runners did us proud, as did our volunteers and our dogs.

Many of those who completed the challenge immediately signed up for another crack at the route next year.

If you were inspired by the Great North Run, why not email fundraising@hearingdogs.org.uk to join next year's event.



Our volunteers did a wonderful job on the day



Self-help videos offer online support

Web visitors can now access our suite of videos covering important hearing loss topics at hearinglink.org

We're delighted to announce a new self-help video section at hearinglink.org, pulling together videos created by Hearing Link Services and hearing loss experts.

Our specialist videos attract thousands of visitors to our website every year, with over 9,000 video views this year alone. The suite of videos is designed to help

tackle questions frequently asked by people living with hearing loss.

Each video covers important hearing loss topics such as what to expect from your audiology appointment, as well as hearing loops, implants, tinnitus and more.

The section brings video resources together in one place, so it is easy to access. The videos will help our website visitors to understand changes in hearing

and make informed choices about the next steps to take in their hearing journey.

There are more videos in production covering topics such as hearing aid maintenance, adjusting to hearing aids, and sudden hearing loss.

So, watch this space for more topics coming soon! To find out more and watch the videos visit hearinglink.org/self-help-videos

British Sign Language offered as a GCSE from 2025

Students will be able to study British Sign Language (BSL) as a GCSE from September 2025.

The Department for Education (DfE) has worked closely with subject experts, stakeholders and schools to develop the course content, which will see students taught around 1,000 signs, and how to use them to communicate effectively with other signers, in work, social and academic settings.

The GCSE assumes no prior knowledge of BSL, but will be accessible for students who use it as their first language.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said: "It is fantastic that British Sign Language will soon be taught in schools up and down the country.

"Good communication is essential both inside and outside the workplace

and this GCSE will give students a vital life skill valued by employers.

"This new qualification will break down barriers, advance equality of opportunity, and celebrate the history and rich culture of British Sign Language."

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Tom Pursglove MP, said: "A BSL GCSE is a fantastic step in the right direction, encouraging more students to learn BSL to help increase the number of BSL users that Deaf people can communicate with, making the UK an even more inclusive society."

British Sign Language was recognised in law as a language of Great Britain in the BSL Act (2022) and the new GCSE will be key to advancing inclusivity within education.



Lots of helpful advice about products

Aston Hearing checked hearing



Our peer support volunteer greets visitors



Phonak talked about their devices



Support advisors Rachel and Hannah



Peer support volunteers Sylvia and Julia



We welcomed a DEAF Link police officer



Chance to get support

Sell-out crowd for final information event of 2023

We opened our doors at The Grange and welcomed over 100 guests eager to find out more about hearing services

Our final free information event of 2023 was a smash hit with our attendees.

The free Hearing Information Day was packed full of tips and resources about hearing loss, hearing dog demonstration and a Helpful Hour. Many said how useful it was to communicate

one-to-one with peer support volunteers and experienced staff, to find out about the support that's available as well as new technology and awareness products.

We hope to run more events in 2024. Keep posted by visiting hearinglink.org for further details.

Tributes

These pages are dedicated to the memory of the people and dogs who have helped shape Hearing Dogs for Deaf People into the successful and respected organisation it is today

Remembering Jill and Sidney

Branch volunteer Jill, partnered with hearing dogs Sophie in 1999 and Sidney in 2013

Jill lived with her husband, John, and worked for much of her early adult life as a children's nanny. They had two daughters, Philippa and Rosamund. Jill was an expert needlewoman and volunteered at St. Albans Abbey, where she spent many hours repairing and embroidering the ceremonial robes of the clergy, as well as doing decorative tapestry work, which was also her "at home" hobby. Even in her eighties, Jill was amazingly fit and took Sophie for twice daily brisk walks in the park. When Hearing Dogs' Hertfordshire fundraising branch started, Jill joined the committee. With Sophie by her side, she drew much support from the public at the many supermarket collections and talks she attended. Jill made flags and banners as well as tabards for her fellow volunteers to wear when "on duty". Jill was 85 when she retired from her various voluntary roles. When Sophie retired, Jill was given successor dog, Sidney, a black Poodle (pictured right) who, like Sophie, became her devoted companion. The two dogs lived side-by-side for two years. Sidney retired in 2020 and sadly passed away in June 2023, followed two months later by Jill. Our condolences go to Jill's family and many friends. Jill lived a busy, selfless and fulfilling life, and will be remembered kindly by those whose lives she touched. May she rest in peace.



Remembering Howard

Hearing Dogs volunteer from Solihull, West Midlands

Howard was a fundraising branch organiser for many years, and when the branch closed, he continued as an individual fundraiser and speaker. Later, he attended a lot of events and talks in his area with Vicky, Hearing Dogs' community fundraising manager. He continued this for several years, along with his hearing dog, Doree, before she passed and he retired due to his Parkinson's diagnosis. Over the years, Howard helped to raise over £50k and he remained a loyal friend and valued supporter of the Charity, until his sad passing in January 2023. He is very much missed.



Remembering Ben

Ambassador hearing dog – a special tribute from trainer Hollie

Little Ben. Wow. Where do I start? Your life was a short one, but full of love, excitement, and adventure. It still doesn't seem real that you are gone, and that neither me, nor your wonderful volunteers who took such great care of you and loved you dearly, will get to have one of your snuggles or "ear washes" again. It was a pleasure to have been in your life. Your photo (shown here), that hangs above my door, will forever share in the sunrises and sunsets I can see from it. You touched the hearts of everyone you met, and neither me nor your volunteers will ever forget you. Love and squishes from us all, Hollie xxx



Remembering Bernard

Hearing Dogs volunteer from Altrincham, Cheshire

Bernard was a keen supporter of Hearing Dogs' Cheshire fundraising branch, alongside his late wife Dorothy. Bernard was a tremendous support to Dorothy when she became branch chair for eight years, accompanying her to the numerous talks she gave throughout the northwest. In recognition of his volunteering services, Bernard served as Branch President. A keen and accomplished sportsman, Bernard was on the books of Blackpool FC in his youth, playing for the Junior Squad for two years, and a further three years in Preston before retiring and concentrating on tennis and golf, at which he excelled. Bernard studied law and after qualifying worked for Southport and Manchester councils, the Northwest Electricity Board, and then for the Law Society as regional director in Yorkshire. Bernard was blessed with a photographic memory; he could tell you the cricket and football match scores going back years! Bernard supported Altrincham Lions for many years and served as chair, organising the annual carnival, which raised funds for local charities. Bernard sadly passed away in October 2023 aged 89. It was Bernard and Dorothy's wish to continue their support for Hearing Dogs by leaving a generous bequest to the Charity, a truly fitting tribute to their memory.



Remembering Kimba

Hearing dog partnered with Mike from South Lanarkshire, Scotland

I first met my hearing dog Kimba as a young Labrador cross, full of life and oozing cuteness. He followed me everywhere and would not leave my side. We bonded like we were just meant to be. Whenever I needed him, he was there with a reassuring look as if to say; "It's all good, Dad, I've got you." When I stumbled over one night, cracking my head on the floor, Kimba immediately ran to help me. Instinctively he pushed his nose under my neck and then positioned himself so I could put my hand on his shoulder to get up. We had many years of fun-filled tender moments, and we were the best of friends. Sadly, it became apparent that Kimba was not well. After 11 years together the thought of losing my dearest friend was unbearable. Making the decision to have him put to sleep is one of the hardest, most heart-breaking choices I've ever had to make. Kimba came into my life and melted away all the hurt, and painful memories of the past. His love and loyalty were unsurpassed. Thank you, for allowing me to share my life with this four-legged angel, my beautiful friend Kimba. One day we'll walk together again never to be parted. Please watch and you'll understand how Kimba was able to touch my soul: [youtube.com/shorts/9BIEV7adT5I](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9BIEV7adT5I)

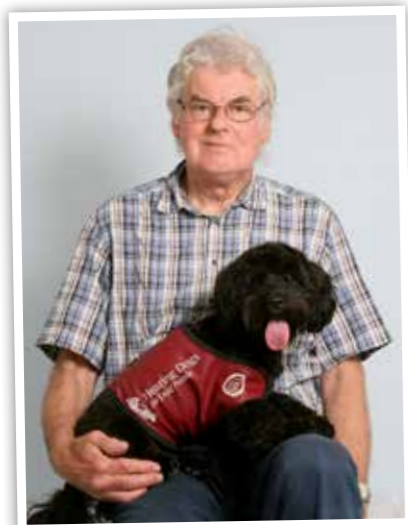


Remembering Derrick

Hearing Dogs volunteer from Knaresborough, North Yorkshire

Derrick didn't have a dog until he was 59 years old, but when he attended a Hearing Dogs demonstration at Cliffe, North Yorkshire, he was captivated. The demonstration was outside, and the dog did its job beautifully, until the moment the door was not opened quickly enough, and he ran round the door to get his treat! From then on, Derrick's wife Eleanor had no problem persuading him that they should train a dog. In those days the Charity carefully sourced unwanted or stray dogs and Derrick marvelled at how forgiving and trusting these dogs could be. Thirty-two dogs later, Derrick was still amazed at how they could change people's lives by their loving, supportive behaviour. He was proud to be known as the "Dog Man" in Knaresborough and loved stopping to talk to people, telling them all about Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Derrick was a much loved and valued member of our volunteer family and is deeply missed by everyone.





Remembering Willow

Hearing dog partnered with Peter from York, North Yorkshire

Now you're no longer here with me,
How I long to see your face,
And have you sat beside me,
Held in a warm embrace.

There's something missing from my life,
I feel it day and night.
I know it will take a lot of time,
Until things feel quite right.

Your sofa space is empty,
The house just isn't the same.
Kitty looks at me in bewilderment,
As if I should call your name.

For one so small you were very quick,
And always keen to greet,
Your many friends along the track,
Especially those with treats.

You were my ears, you served me well.
A friend, you enriched my days,
Helping me constantly through the years
With your gentle and loving ways.

But now you've crossed the Rainbow Bridge,
Run free in endless sun.
Was Samson there to greet you?
Together again having fun.

Remembering David

Hearing dogs volunteer from York, North Yorkshire

My husband David first became a full-time puppy trainer in February 2011, when 12-week-old cockapoo Tex joined us. And so began our long-term association with the Hearing Dogs family. With no previous experience of dogs, David went on to help train another four cockapoos: Fudge, Fenton, Buzz and Bramble, and two poodles: Joanie and our current dog Pasha. David was the one who did the longer daily walks along the river Foss, and was confident about letting them run free off-lead. David also took on the night-time "pee and poo" shifts, and slept on the floor in the lounge with them if they were poorly. He quickly became involved with all aspects of Hearing Dogs, including promotional days and events, giving talks, helping the pups to keep up-to-date with their Twitter accounts, and was particularly well-known for his photographic skills. David died very suddenly on 12 December 2022 leaving a huge hole in all our lives. The inscription on his gravestone sums up his interests: "Much-loved husband, motorsport enthusiast, caravanner, photographer and trainer of hearing dogs." I love and miss him so much. June



Remembering Marti

Hearing dog partnered with Jan in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

Marti, my astounding hearing dog, my special boy. He was nearly 15 and had survived two strokes previously. His strong spirit, huge heart and loyal character were present to the end. We had many adventures together. Marti made me laugh every day, and I learned to be one step ahead with his cheeky ways. One experience that stands prominent, happened in 2012, when Marti saved my life in a housefire in my previous home. He alerted me to the smoke alarm, nudging me twice to tell me how urgent it was. My kitchen was ablaze. One of the firemen said we would be "gone" if we'd been in the house just a few moments longer. Marti not only saved my life, he also saved his pal Simba, our cat, too. Marti was awarded Heroic Partnership of the Year 2012 and presented with a glass trophy by HRH The Princess Royal. I'm very proud of Marti and will love him for eternity. My boy.

Remembering Doreen

Hearing Dogs volunteer, partnered with Jingle (d) and Casper, from Plymouth, Devon

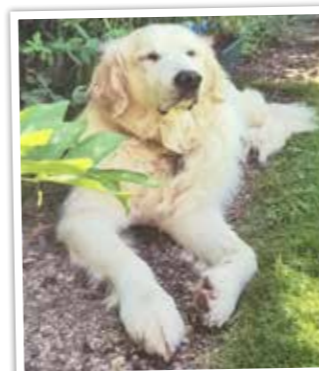
Doreen became a volunteer speaker for Hearing Dogs in 1997. She became an active member of the Plymouth Branch, and travelled within her local area giving talks for the Charity and raising considerable funds. As Doreen's own hearing deteriorated in 2000 she became eligible for a hearing dog of her own. Her first dog came from a litter born around Christmas and all were given festive names. Doreen received Jingle! The name caused much amusement when combined with her surname Bell. Jingle Bell was a character, and greatly enjoyed the fundraising trips and talks. Jingle was nominated for the Life-changing Hearing Dog Award in 2010. At the presentation in London she met HRH The Princess Royal, who chuckled at the name Jingle Bell. Sadly, after many fun years, Jingle passed away. Eventually a new dog came for a trial visit. Casper and Doreen hit it off immediately, and he remained another faithful friend until her death on 16 June 2023 aged 99. Doreen will be remembered and missed by her family and many friends. She was outgoing, cheerful, dedicated member of the branch, who raised many thousands of pounds for the cause. Doreen died peacefully leaving a grieving family who are proud of her achievements.



Remembering Duncan

Hearing dog partnered with Belinda from Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Farewell to Duncan
My much-loved hearing dog.
Off for a lovely walk with Claire
Then into the garden questing the air.
A knock on the door, Dunc must take a toy,
A present is needed, given with joy.
Sunday to church, quiet by my seat,
Hopefully looking, who's got a treat?!
Burgundy coat and special lead,
Ready to shop, whenever the need.
Wind, rain or sunshine, close by my side,
Green fields to run on, grassy and wide.
Never a friend so kind or so caring,
All of our lives so happily sharing.
Sadly, the time's come we have to let go.
Farewell Lovely Man and Claire's Dunky Boy.



Remembering Ivy

Hearing dog partnered with Claire from Luton, Bedfordshire

I was so lucky and feel so privileged to have been partnered with Yorkipoo, Ivy, for 14 years. I originally wanted a big dog and was surprised when I was partnered with Ivy, but from the moment I met her she won me over. She was such a special character; a little bit of a diva, always ready to fetch a ball, so loving and very confident. I – along with everyone else – adored her, and I trusted her implicitly. Before Ivy I struggled to sleep. My son has a long-term health condition and would wake up in pain; I was in a constant state of wakefulness and feelings of panic about not being there for him. Ivy gave me the gift of sleep amongst many other things. Ivy literally changed my life, and I will be forever grateful. We shared many wonderful memories together and she is sorely missed.



Remembering Temba

Hearing dog partnered with Evelyn (Yvonne) in Lichfield, Staffordshire

From our early days in partnership Temba and I became heavily involved in fundraising for the Charity, attending many events to raise funds, which we really enjoyed. Temba retired three years ago but was still my best friend, full of character to her very last day. She passed away at the age of 16. Temba was not only a great working dog, but she was also my fantastic companion. I miss her.



Remembering Inca

Hearing dog partnered with Lisa from Havant, Hampshire

It's with a heavy heart that I let you know that my dearest Inca passed over the Rainbow Bridge on 13 July 2023. She waited for me to return home from Greece, and we had to make the decision to let her go as her back legs went. We're truly devastated, and Lima my successor dog is lost. Even though Inca decided to work to the very end, and fought on, we knew it was the right thing to do. I want to thank Hearing Dogs for our time together, our nomination, everyone's kindness and for loving her. The opportunities you gave us to meet celebrities are what was truly a credit to Inca our special dog. I've set up a JustGiving page ([justgiving.com/fundraising-edit/inca-baldock](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising-edit/inca-baldock)) in memory of her passing. I hope her legacy will enable more mini Incas to follow in her pawprints. Thank you to everyone at Hearing Dogs for the amazing work you do.



Remembering Simon

Hearing dog partnered with Brett from Sheffield, South Yorkshire

Simon was amazing and made such a difference to me. We were a perfect match. Simon went to work with me every day. Having Simon in my life gave me so much more happiness and confidence. He was a special boy who was smart and extremely affectionate. Simon had a wonderful and unique personality that brought happiness to all our friends and family. He will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

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