

ACTION ON
HEARING
LOSS

Hearing loss in the workplace

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TODAYS PRESENTATION

- Action on Hearing Loss
- Introduction to hearing loss
- Impact of hearing loss
- Employment research

ACTION ON HEARING LOSS

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WHO ARE WE?

Action on Hearing Loss is the new name for RNID. We're the charity working for a world where hearing loss doesn't limit or label people, where tinnitus is silenced – and where people value and look after their hearing.



WHAT DO WE DO?

- Residential homes, supported housing and community outreach
- Biomedical research
- Communication support
- Social research
- Influencing

INTRODUCTION TO HEARING LOSS

HEARING LOSS IN THE UK

- 10 million people
- One in six of the population
- By 2031 set to rise to 14.5 million people
- Yet, it is neglected and underfunded
- And has significant impacts on quality of life



STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- It is difficult to say how many people in the UK use sign language but it is estimated at about **50,000 - 70,000**
- A significant number of people have a dual sensory loss, and this number is also set to grow as the population ages. Current figures stand at around **356,000 Deafblind** people (Deafblind UK).

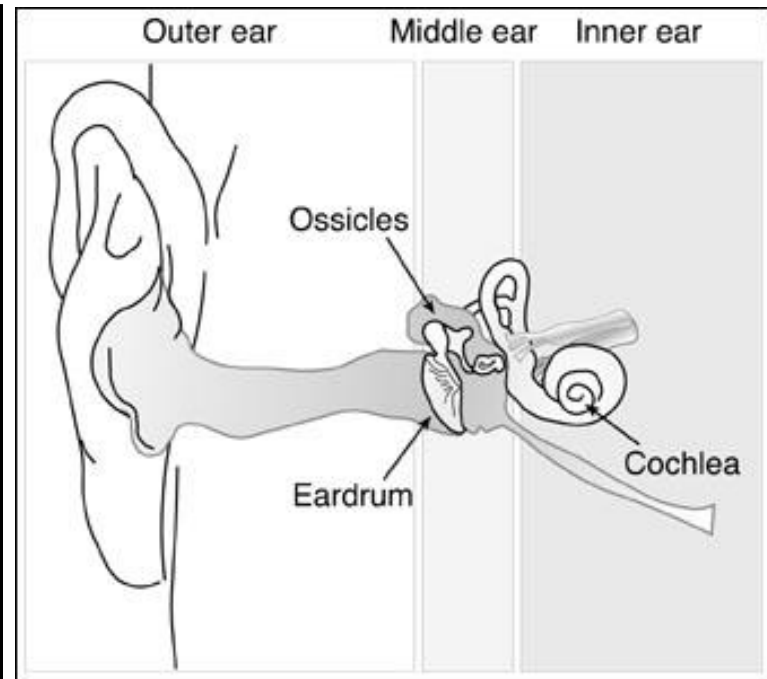
WHAT IS BSL?

A visual spatial language with information shown through combinations of:

- handshapes
- hand orientation
- hand movements
- body movement
- facial expressions.

SUMMARY: TYPES OF HEARING LOSS

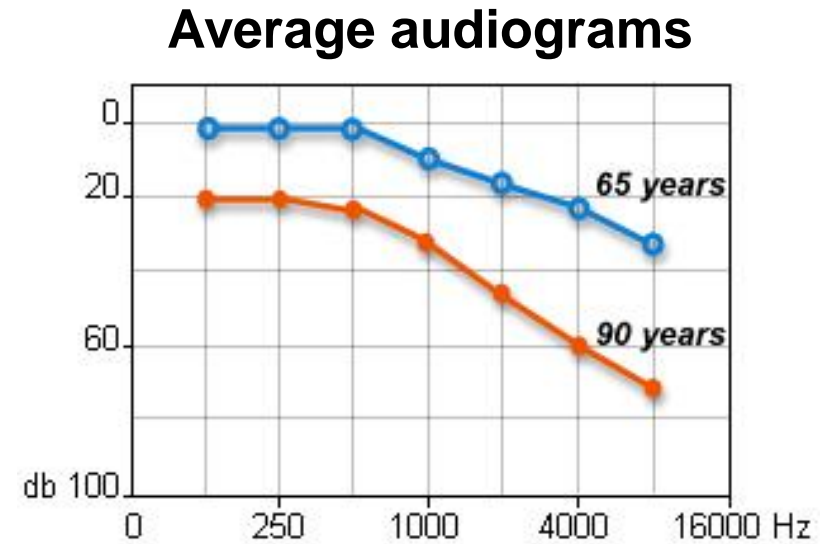
Type	Area affected	Causes
Conductive	Middle ear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blockage• Damage• Infection
Sensorineural	Inner ear (hair cells) or auditory nerve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noise• Drug side effects• Genetics• Infections• Ageing



conductive sensorineural

AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS

- Progressive hearing loss
- High frequencies lost first
- Hair cells and auditory neurons die



Most common sensory impairment among elderly. 70% of people aged over 70 have a hearing loss

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

Normal hearing



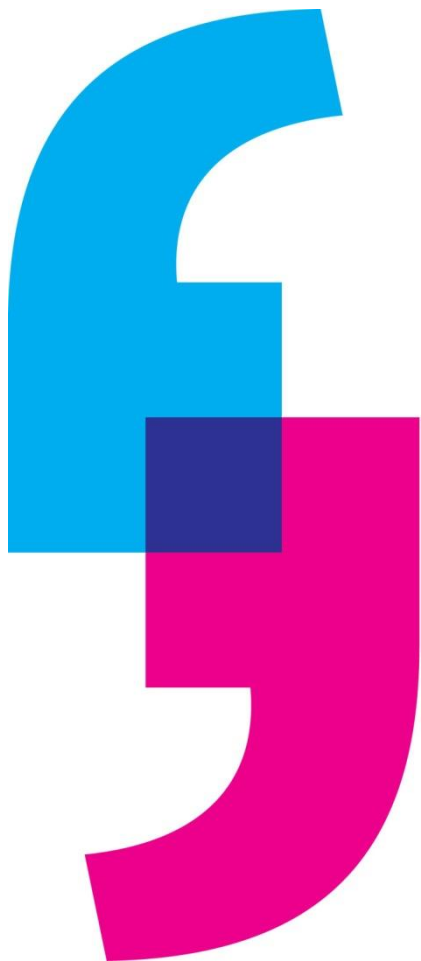
Mild hearing loss



Moderate - Severe



IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS



“When you lose your vision, you lose contact with things; when you lose your hearing, you lose contact with people.”

Helen Keller

THE IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

- **Mild hearing loss** – may use a hearing aid or find lipreading useful, particularly in noisy situations.
- **Moderate hearing loss** – may have difficulty in hearing what is said without a hearing aid. Many will lipread. Some may use sign language or need other communication support
- **Severe hearing loss** – may have difficulty in following what is being said even with a hearing aid. Most will lipread and some will use sign language or need other communication support
- **Profound hearing loss** – may find that hearing aids are of little benefit for communication. Most will lipread, and they will need some form of communication support. BSL may be their first or preferred language.

LIPREADING

- Only about 60% of English words are visible on the lips
- Context is crucial

THE IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

- Barriers to communication
- Isolation and exclusion
- Higher prevalence of depression and anxiety
- Stigma
- Delay in taking action – 10 years

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- Make sure you have the person's attention
- Face the person you are talking to
- Keep your face and mouth clear
- Keep background noise to a minimum and make sure there is enough light
- Use natural facial expression & gesture
- Make sure your face or mouth is not hidden behind your hands, cigarettes, beard etc.
- Write things down if needed.
- Give the other person time to respond and use different words if they don't understand

OPPORTUNITY BLOCKED

OPPORTUNITY BLOCKED

- Quantitative research project published in 2007.
- The experiences of 870 people with hearing loss in the UK.
- Conducted at a time of high employment.

RESULTS

- 63% of people with hearing loss were in paid employment, compared to 75% of the general population.
- One in five people were unemployed and looking for work, compared to only one in twenty in the general population
- 36% had been looking for work for more than two years, with 18% having been looking for more than five.

REASONS

- Deafness itself is no barrier to work.
- 59% identified the attitudes of employers as the main problem.
- A lack of specialist knowledge from advisers and support.

IN WORK

- Very few people stated that they were unhappy in their work, but
- 55% said that they felt isolated in the workplace.
- 26% said that they had been harassed at work because of their hearing loss.
- 51% felt that hearing loss had affected their opportunities for promotion.

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

ACTION ON
HEARING
~~LOSS~~

A research report
into hearing loss
in the workplace

By Laura Matthews

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UNLIMITED
POTENTIAL?

2011 EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH

- We wanted to find out:
 - Impact of hearing loss on employment experiences
 - What support they were given
 - What support they would like to receive
- In depth interviews with 27 people who lost some or all of their hearing whilst of working age
- Questions in the 2010 annual survey

IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

- When diagnosed people felt devastated and frightened
- Fearful their hearing would get worse, be unable to do their job, or that they will lose their job
- Negative impact on confidence
- Need the right information and support

CULTURE

- Culture has the biggest impact on the experience that someone with hearing loss has in the workplace.
- HR and OH played a scrutinising role rather than a supportive one
- Mixed experiences with colleagues

MANAGERS

- Passive – broadly supportive but don't take action
- Positive action – fully supportive and actively finds out information about support mechanisms and adjustments
- Negative action – not supportive and possibly discriminatory

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Difficulties include:

- Meetings
- Telephones
- Office layout

Range of solutions used to overcome these difficulties

ADJUSTMENTS AND SUPPORT

- Audiology services focus on fitting hearing aids, do not provide a holistic service
- Lack of awareness about Access to Work
- Participants would like to try out equipment before they buy it

CHANGING JOBS AND LOOKING FOR WORK

- 1 in 7 respondents who lost their hearing whilst of working age changed jobs due to their hearing loss
- Employment advisers generally have little understanding of needs
- Early retirement as a direct consequence of hearing loss

SOLUTIONS

Report includes a range of solutions:

- improved awareness of Access to Work and the Equality Act
- audiology services supporting people in a holistic way
- individuals being assertive and finding out information

EQUALITY ACT 2010

- Definition of disability
- Reasonable Adjustments
 - Policies and practices
 - Physical feature
 - Auxiliary aids and services

ANY QUESTIONS?

