

# Help for Hearing-Impaired People

The Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility is working on a series of papers aimed at helping parishes become more aware of disabled people and their needs in our churches. This is the second paper in this series, which is intended to maintain a high awareness of the needs of disabled people.

At least one person in five has significant hearing loss. Of these three quarters are over sixty years of age. 1% have severe to profound loss (Figures R.N.I.D.)

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## Contacts

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More information is available from:

R.N.I.D. SOUTH EAST, 39 Store Street,  
London, WC1E 7DB. Tel: 0207 813 2480  
Local Contact: 01223 411010 Minicom 411030

Cambridge Deaf Association, 8 Romsey  
Terrace, Cambridge, CB1 3NH (Ely Diocesan  
Association for the Deaf) Tel: 01223 246237  
Minicom 01223 411801

CAMTAD, Buchan House, Buchan Street,  
Cambridge, CB4 2XF. Tel: 01223 460616

Chaplaincy for the Deaf c/o Bishop Woodford  
House, Barton Road, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4DX.  
Tel: 01353 752701

The Report of the General Synod's Advisory  
Board of Ministry "The Church Among Deaf  
People" is available in the Resources Centre,  
Bishop Woodford House, Barton Road, Ely.

Copies available from Church House  
Bookshop, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P  
£4.95

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## Approach to Church and Hall

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Is there a busy road?

Are there safe, visible crossing places on roads  
and church premises?

Are there direction signs?

Is the surrounding area well lit and free from  
obstruction?

Is there a splayed entrance to the car park to  
improve visibility?

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## Are Notice Boards...?

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... Easily visible, displaying the Logo sign?

... Containing up to date information?

... With times of services clearly displayed?  
(Hearing-impaired people depend upon  
visual information)

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## The Building

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At the entrance, is there a seating plan showing  
the best seats for the hard of hearing?

Is there a pew sheet with order of service and  
current notices?

Do "welcomers" know how to approach and  
communicate with deaf people?

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## Worship

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Is the Vicar's face visible? Is attention drawn and held?

Can ALL participants be seen and heard clearly? Have lesson readers had the opportunity of taking the Diocesan training course?

Is there a loop/infra-red system installed and checked regularly?

Is there a microphone system (static and roving) available and are all trained to use it?

Are signers available if appropriate? Is it known where to get one? (Local R.N.I.D.)

Are hymn numbers displayed?

If an overhead projector or video is used, are there subtitles?

Are measures taken to exclude background noise? For instance, are there some services that children do not normally attend?

Are hearing-impaired people encouraged to take part in all aspects of church life and offered the help to do so?

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## Church Life

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Are the hearing-impaired people known to the vicar and PCC members?

Are members of the church aware of how best to communicate with hearing-impaired people? Is training and advice available?

Are PCC and other meetings held in a quiet room, with seating arranged so that all can see and hear the chairman?

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## Hints on communicating with hard of hearing people

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Choose a quiet place with no distractions

Attract the person's attention and make clear what you wish to discuss with them.

In a group, make it clear who is talking.

Ensure that glasses and hearing aids are being used correctly.

Sit face to face, 3 to 4 feet apart, heads on same level.

Have a light on your face, do not eat, smoke or put your hands or anything else in front of your face during conversation. remember a beard may obscure the lips.

Keep calm! Speak naturally, clearly and more slowly than usual, keeping your voice deep. DO NOT SHOUT!

Speak fluently, in whole sentences, checking at regular intervals that the hearer understands you. Write down important information, also anything the person cannot decipher from your speech.

If repeating, say a whole sentence again, or rephrase what you have said. Single words are difficult to lip read.

Natural gestures and facial expressions help, exaggerated ones do not.

Remember deafness does not reduce intelligence!