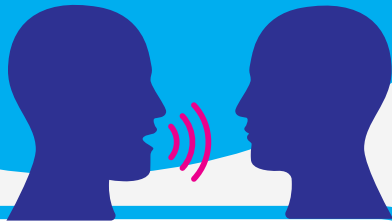


General communication tips for someone with hearing loss



Where lip reading is possible:

- Make sure they face you
- Make sure you can see their face clearly
- Make sure the person gets your attention before they start speaking
- Ask them to speak normally and not exaggerate their lip movements

- Make people aware that you are deaf or have a hearing loss and your preferred communication style
- In public spaces, such as shops and public transport, you are exempt from wearing a face covering if you cannot wear your hearing aid or cochlear implant processor securely with a covering, or if this will interfere with your processor
- You can also ask people to maintain social distancing and lower their face covering if you need them to do this to communicate with you

Find out more about exemptions at www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/face-coverings

The below are particularly important when someone cannot use visual cues, such as on the telephone or when wearing a mask:

- Ask them to **speak clearly**
- Ask them to **repeat or say things differently** if you do not understand what they have said
- **Reduce background noise** as much as possible by moving to a quieter space if possible
- **Use assistive devices** like remote microphones with hearing aids to improve the quality of speech over background noise
- **Write things down** use pen on paper, text on device screens or whiteboards
- If possible, ask them to **speak to a relative or friend**

Please be aware that different rules apply in health and social care settings. You can find guidance for health and social care professionals on the Action on Hearing Loss website.

Communication tips for the general public

- Remember that people who are D/deaf or have hearing loss have individual communication needs and you should ask someone how best you can communicate with them. Not every tip below will be appropriate for every person who is D/deaf or has hearing loss.
- Be patient and considerate, it is a stressful time for us all, but people with deafness and hearing loss who rely on facial expressions and lipreading are finding things especially difficult right now.

The below are particularly important when someone cannot use visual cues, such as on the telephone or when wearing a mask:

- Make sure you are **facing the person** you are talking to and speak clearly – avoid shouting, speaking too fast or unnecessarily slow
- If someone doesn't understand you, **repeat what you said** or phrase it differently, use plain language
- In a noisy place, **move to a quieter area** if possible
- **Use simple gestures** such as pointing or waving to get someone's attention.
- **Write things down** – use pen on paper, text on device screens, or whiteboards
- If they ask, **speak to a relative or friend**

Please be aware that different rules apply in health and social care settings. You can find guidance for health and social care professionals on the Action on Hearing Loss website.

Communication tips useful tools

There are several tools that can be used to improve communication and to highlight individuals specific needs.

It is important that both people with hearing loss and the general public are aware and make use of these tools where appropriate.

- **Speech-to-text apps**

There are live speech-to-text apps available, though with varying levels of accuracy depending on background noise and speed of conversation.

- **Video Relay Services**

Utilise Video Relay Services, such as InterpreterNow, for British Sign Language users.

- **Lanyards**

People might choose to wear the Sunflower or Hidden Disability Lanyard, or homemade badges to highlight their needs.

- **Exemption cards**

We have been working with the government to create exemption cards that people can carry to show that they do not need to wear a face covering, or to highlight where they might need others to lower theirs.



Please be aware that different rules apply in health and social care settings. You can find guidance for health and social care professionals on the Action on Hearing Loss website.