



Your life. Your needs. Your circle.

Information and support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

This information sheet is a guide to support available in Gloucestershire, and how to find out more. It also includes some practical advice about managing hearing loss.

Support from Adult Social Care

The Adult Social Care Sensory Services Team provides comprehensive support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, their families and carers, including:

- Advice, guidance and support;
- Assessment and provision of services to adults;
- Help and advice to find pieces of equipment to help you with day-to-day living.
- Deaf awareness training for family or people who care for deaf people;
- Information about support provided by statutory and other voluntary organisations.

If you want to be referred to Sensory Services for an assessment, please contact the Social Care Adult Helpdesk on:

Phone: 01452 426868

Fax: 01452 427359

Email: socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

To contact a member of the Sensory Services Team:

Phone: 01452 426387

Minicom/Textphone: 01452 426175

Mobile phone (SMS/text message): 07919 166566

Fax: 01452 426124

Telecare

Telecare is the provision of care and support using technology. The Telecare system uses sensors placed around your home to monitor accidents and emergency situations.

If you wish to be referred to Telecare for an assessment, please contact the Social Care Adult Helpdesk:

Phone: 01452 426868

Fax: 01452 427359

Email: socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

If you have any queries or questions about Telecare, please contact the Telecare Team:

Phone: 01452 583743

Fax: 01242 524837

Email: telecare@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/telecare

Will I be able to get help?

To find out if you, or the person you care for, will be eligible for support from Adult Social Care we will arrange to assess your needs. Together we can discuss what the problems are and decide what support is needed to reduce any assessed risk. It may not always be possible for you to get all the support you ask for as we only have limited resources. To request an assessment, contact the Social Care Adult Helpdesk.

Will I have to pay?

There is no charge for help from health or Sensory Services field work staff. There may be a charge for services following your assessment based on your ability to pay. Some equipment is loaned at no charge.

Other sources of information, advice and support

The Gloucestershire Deaf Association (GDA)

GDA is a local voluntary organisation providing information and support services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. GDA runs social and leisure activities, a youth service, and has an equipment room with “try before you buy” opportunities. The GDA is also the point of contact for the interpreting service, and runs lip-reading classes.

Gloucestershire Deaf Association can be contacted at the Centre for Deaf People, Colin Road, Barnwood, Gloucester, GL4 7JN.

Phone: 01452 372999

Minicom: 01452 372600

Fax: 01452 372288

Email: admin@glosdeaf.org.uk

Website: www.glosdeaf.org.uk

To find out about other sources of support that may be available in your area:

Contact: Your Circle

Website: www.yourcircle.org.uk

Contact: Healthwatch Gloucestershire ‘Find a Service’

Phone: Freephone 0800 652 5193

Email: info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Website: <http://findaservice.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk>

Disability Employment Advisers

Disability Employment Advisers (DEA) are specially trained to help you overcome difficulties in finding suitable employment.

Contact: Your local Job Centre (look under 'J' in your phone book)

Website: www.direct.gov.uk

Practical ways of helping people who are hard of hearing

Hearing loss increases with age, and significantly affects the majority of people over 75 years old. It is easy to underestimate the personal and practical problems that can result, but there is a lot that can be done to help, and it does not always need to involve a specialist service.

Hearing loss is not always realised or readily admitted, but is likely to exist if;

- You have difficulty hearing normal conversation, especially in a group of people;
- You have a problem hearing the doorbell, using the phone, or hearing TV.

Hearing Aids

Hearing loss is going to be present if a hearing aid has ever been provided, whether or not it is still being used. If there is a hearing aid, check that it is working and encourage its use.

One of the main reasons people stop using hearing aids is that they are faulty, or the battery needs replacing.

- Check that the ear mould is not blocked up with wax and turn the volume dial to maximum; if there is no whistling noise it is likely the battery needs replacing;
- Hearing aids should to be serviced regularly (every 6 months);
- There are clinics at a range of hospitals and local centres across the county. They also provide free batteries;

For existing users, there are drop-in clinics at the main hospitals or appointments can be made by the Audiology Department at the NHS Trust in your area:

- Gloucestershire Royal Hospital – 08454 228463
- Cheltenham General Hospital – 08454 224119

If there is an obvious hearing problem and you've never been provided with a hearing aid, you should ask your GP for a hearing test and possibly an appointment with a consultant.

A hearing aid is the best means of maximising hearing in a way that is sympathetic to the nature of an individual's hearing loss. Getting a hearing aid will help you benefit from other forms of assistance with hearing.

Common difficulties experienced - what can be done to help

Using the Telephone

Problem: Unable to hear it ring

Solution: Increase the ringer volume on the phone - also contact BT Age and Disability Department (Phone: 150) who will arrange for another bell to be fitted free.

You can get a flashing light alert unit that is connected to the phone. They are available from a range of different retail outlets. Adult Social Care may be able to provide a unit on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information.

Problem: Unable to hear people properly when on the phone.

Solution: Have a special phone with an amplifier. Alternatively, if you are a hearing aid user, switch to the T setting. You can then make use of the inductive coupler (loop) in the receiver. You may need to change the phone if neither of these is fitted.

If you're renting from BT, they will advise and exchange, (Phone: 150). You can order a free guide to all BT services for disabled people on the same number.

Adult Social Care may be able to provide an amplifier on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information. Alternatively, you can buy a new phone that has an amplifier.

Hearing someone at the front door

Problem: Unable to hear the bell.

Solution: Buy a flashing light unit or different tone doorbell, or a wire-free bell (a portable sound unit that can be taken from room to room). Adult Social Care may be able to provide a unit on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information.

Listening to television

Problem: Unable to hear, and volume up so loud it affects rest of household (and even next door!)

Solution: Get closer (it also helps people with sight loss).

Turn on subtitles - Ceefax no 888.

Make use of an assisted listening device or loop system. You can buy these, or Adult Social Care may be able to provide a unit on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information.

Problems with conversations

Problem: Communication difficulties, particular problems when in conversation with a group of people.

Solution: A loop system can be a great help to a hearing aid user. There are both fixed and portable systems available as well as devices for people without hearing aids. Adult Social Care may be able to provide a unit on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information.

Help all parties in the conversation to have greater awareness and understanding of basic principles of verbal communication.

Smoke Alarm

Problem: Unable to hear the smoke alarm should it activate.

Solution: For people who are hard of hearing – a specialist smoke alarm transmitter linked to a strobe/vibrating pillow alert to be used during the night when in bed and not wearing hearing aids.

For people who are deaf – a specialist smoke alarm transmitter linked to a vibrating pager or flashing beacon during the day and at night can be connected to a vibrating pillow alert.

Adult Social care may be able to provide this equipment on loan; contact the Adult Helpdesk for more information.

Please contact the Social Care Adult Helpdesk if you have any questions, require further information regarding anything in this leaflet, or if you would like to request an assessment. The Helpdesk can be contacted on:

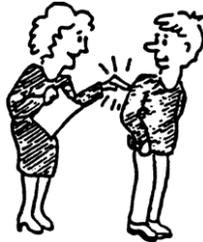
Phone: 01452 426868

Fax: 01452 427359

Email: socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

10 rules when speaking to people who have a hearing impairment

1. Make sure you have their attention and they are looking at you. Ask them how they want to communicate.



6. Keep the normal rhythm of speech but slow down slightly.



2. Make sure that background noise is at a minimum.



7. Do not shout



3. Look directly at the person and don't turn away whilst talking. Ideally be between 3 and 6 feet apart.



8. Use facial expression, body language and gestures where appropriate.



4. Make sure that sufficient light is on your face.



9. If a sentence is not heard try to rephrase it, or as a last measure write it down.



5. Make sure that your face or mouth is not hidden behind hands, cigarettes, beard, etc.



10. Always be patient and friendly and take time to communicate.



