Including You

An information guide for hard of hearing people in Fife
Introduction

Losing your hearing can be a distressing experience. It can cut you off from friends and family, groups and social situations, and lead to feelings of isolation and even depression. Added to this, people around you may underestimate the sometimes devastating effects of acquired hearing loss.

“I was really struggling with my deafness – I stopped going out, and my marriage was suffering. No-one can give me my hearing back, but I’ve learned so much and am starting to cope much better.”

However, the negative effects of acquired hearing loss are not inevitable, and with the right support and information, hard of hearing people can continue to enjoy a high quality of life. This guide is designed to provide you and your friends, family and supporters with a full range of advice and information to ensure that you continue to live life to the full. The guide was produced as part of Deaf Action’s Including You Project, funded by The Big Lottery, to help improve the quality of life of hard of hearing people.

Throughout this guide, contact details for services printed in **bold italic** can be found in Section 8, Contact Details, alphabetical list.
Do you have a hearing loss?
It is estimated that over 60,000 people in Fife have a hearing loss*. Are you one of them?

Do you:
• Miss parts of conversations when more than one person is talking?
• Have difficulty hearing voices, particularly children?
• Sometimes misunderstand what people are saying?
• Feel that people often seem to be mumbling or speaking quietly?
• Avoid social situations because you struggle to follow what is going on?

If this sounds familiar, you may want to discuss it with your GP. There are simple tests that he or she can do in the surgery to check if you do have a hearing loss. If appropriate, you can then be referred to your local NHS Audiology Department.

People who live in North East Fife and the East Neuk may prefer to attend Kings Cross Audiology Department in Dundee.

You can be referred to Audiology by your GP or other health workers.

You will receive an appointment detailing the date, time and venue for your initial consultation. If this is unsuitable or you need additional support to attend, such as communication support (see page 14 for more details on communication support), you should advise the department.

At the appointment, an Audiologist will discuss your hearing loss issues. They will check your medical history and explain the procedure for the hearing test. During the hearing test, you will wear headphones and tell the Audiologist when you hear specific sounds. The results will then be explained and you should be advised about options for managing your hearing loss. These may include:

• Effective communication tactics
• Lipreading skills
• Assistive listening devices such as help with the television
• Hearing aids
• Ear, Nose and Throat consultation

*The National Study of Hearing, A. Davis and population estimates for Scotland

What happens at an Audiology Department appointment?
There are two NHS Audiology centres in Fife, as well as hearing aid repair clinics throughout Fife.

Adult Audiology services are located at

• Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy
• Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline

Throughout this guide, contact details for services printed in bold italic can be found in Section 8, Contact Details, alphabetical list.
**Getting your hearing aid**

The Audiology team will make an appointment so you can be issued with your hearing aid(s). At the appointment, aids will be chosen for you according to your needs and requirements.

Hearing aids can be described as either analogue or digital, depending on the technology they use to process sound. In the past, the NHS issued mainly analogue hearing aids, but now you will be offered more modern digital hearing aids.

**Analogue hearing aids**

These electronic devices have a microphone to pick up sound, which is amplified and reproduced by a receiver that acts as a loudspeaker.

**Digital hearing aids**

These use a tiny computer to process sound, and can be programmed to suit your particular hearing loss and different listening conditions. If your hearing loss changes, they can be re-programmed to match changes in your hearing levels. Many digital aids use directional microphones which can help you hear sounds from in front of you more easily.

Your aid(s) can be programmed for different functions such as listening to music, automatic telephone adjustment, and for using induction loop systems. (See page 8 for more information about loop systems). These are just a few options available; your audiologist should discuss all of the options with you. He or she should discuss your hobbies and interests to help you to decide which settings would be best for your lifestyle; for example if you like to attend concerts, then a music setting may help.

You should get verbal and written instructions on how to use your hearing aid(s). The instructions should cover:

- The controls on the hearing aid
- Hearing aid maintenance
- Insertion of the hearing aid
- How to get batteries
- How to access the hearing aid repair service

It may take time for you to get used to wearing a hearing aid and the many different sounds you will hear. They will not restore your normal hearing and, unlike the human ear, are not able to filter out the sounds that you do not want to actively listen to – the aid will amplify all sounds, including background noise. It takes practice to learn how to ignore background noise, and is best to build up the time you spend using your hearing aid.

If you feel you have not received enough information about your hearing aid(s), it is important that you ask your audiologist for the information you need, to help you cope with the hearing aid as well as possible.
Review of hearing aids
You will be given the hearing aid for a 12 week trial, during which you should try to use it in all possible listening situations. An appointment will be arranged for you to return to the department to discuss how you have managed and to provide additional support where required.

Existing NHS hearing aid users are able to refer themselves to Audiology for reassessment or upgrade of their hearing aid. When you contact the department, an appointment will be arranged for a hearing test and review of your current hearing aid(s).

Audiology Repair Clinics
A repair and general maintenance service for people with an NHS hearing aid is provided at locations throughout Fife. You will be seen by a member of the Audiology team who will check your ear, hearing aid and earmould. They will discuss their findings and recommend a course of action.

If your hearing aids have been issued from Kings Cross, you need to use the repair clinic based in St Andrews Community Hospital to have your hearing aids repaired and collect batteries.

The table below shows hearing aid repair services in Fife and how to access them. Addresses and contact details are provided in Section 8, under NHS Audiology Departments and Repair Clinics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinic</th>
<th>Day and Time</th>
<th>Access arrangements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrie Street Clinic, Methil</td>
<td>Fri 8.30am – 12.00noon</td>
<td>Appointment required. Book via Victoria Hospital Audiology department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupar Health Centre</td>
<td>Mon 2.00pm – 4.00pm</td>
<td>Appointment required. Book via Victoria Hospital Audiology department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews Community Hospital</td>
<td>Tues 10.00am – 12.30pm</td>
<td>Appointment required. Book via Victoria Hospital Audiology department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews Community Hospital</td>
<td>Monday (ENT) 9.00 – 4.30 Tuesday &amp; Friday (Audiology clinic)- 9.00 - 4.30</td>
<td>Appointment required. Book via Kings Cross Audiology department. Service for people issued hearing aids from NHS Fife Hospitals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline</td>
<td>Mon to Fri 9.30am – 4.30pm</td>
<td>Appointment required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy</td>
<td>Mon to Fri 9.00am – 4.30pm</td>
<td>Appointment required</td>
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Hearing aid batteries
The normal life span of a hearing aid battery is only around 5 to 10 days, although this depends on the type of hearing aid you wear. You can get batteries for NHS hearing aids free of charge from audiology departments and repair clinics, from some health centres, and from Deaf Action’s Including You Worker.

Cleaning your hearing aid
To get the best out of your hearing aid, it should be cleaned regularly. A slight blockage of ear wax or moisture in the tubing can reduce the sound quality.

The tubing and ear mould can be detached from the hearing aid in order to be cleaned. The mould and tubing can be put in warm water with a little mild detergent and cleaned with a cloth. They need to be completely dry before re-attaching to the hearing aid, so it may help to clean the mould and tubing last thing at night and leave it to dry overnight. At no point should the hearing aid itself be in contact with water.

If you do not feel comfortable detaching and re-attaching the tubing, the mould can be cleaned daily with a wet wipe. Small cleaning instruments such as a brush or hook can be used to remove ear wax. You should receive cleaning instruments when you get issued with your hearing aid, or you can request them from your local Audiology department.

Cochlear Implants
A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or has a severe hearing loss. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin.

An implant does not restore normal hearing. Instead, it can give a deaf person a useful representation of sounds in the environment and help that person to understand speech. Implants can be of use to someone who has had hearing and can remember sound, and may also be of use to some people who have never had hearing.

Refer to your GP or Audiologist for further information on cochlear implants, and for discussion on referral to an implant centre. There is an assessment process which you will be expected to go through prior to any decision being made on whether you are a suitable candidate for an implant.

Further information on cochlear implants and support groups can be found on the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) website, or by contacting the RNID office.
Communication

Communication is the single biggest hurdle faced by hard of hearing people in everyday life, and good communication in the home, with family and friends is crucial to maintaining your quality of life.

Hard of hearing people usually communicate using speech. The difficulties, of course, lie in trying to understand what other people say. For this reason, the actions of the speaker are crucial to making sure that you are able to participate in the conversation.

When talking to others, even though you might not be aware of it, you probably use a range of “tools” at your disposal – residual hearing, hearing aids, lipreading skills, concentration and sometimes a degree of guesswork. All of this takes a lot of energy, so you may find yourself getting tired when trying to lipread for longer periods.

This section provides advice on getting the most out of spoken communication. You may want to share photocopies of this section with family, friends, and all those who want to communicate with you.

“good communication in the home, with family and friends is crucial to maintaining your quality of life”
Guidelines for communicating with a hard of hearing person

• Get the attention of the hard of hearing person before you start to speak. If he or she is not looking at your face before you start speaking, they will not be able to use lipreading skills and may miss the topic of the conversation.

• Speak at your normal volume, and slightly more slowly. Do not shout or exaggerate your lip patterns as this will distort the message. Lack of clarity of speech sounds is often more of a problem than lack of volume. For example, people who have difficulty hearing consonant sounds (which are commonly lost with a high-frequency hearing loss) won’t be helped by the speaker simply increasing in volume.

• Make sure that the hard of hearing person knows the topic of your conversation.

• Use natural gestures and facial expressions to help get your message across, such as nodding or shaking your head when appropriate.

• Do not turn away or cover your mouth when you are speaking. Many hard of hearing people use lipreading (even though they may not be aware of it) and need to see your face clearly.

• Make sure that your face is well-lit, and there is no bright light or window behind you, which can cast your face into shadow.

• Try to reduce background noise, or find a quieter room for your conversation. Soft furnishings will absorb noise and reduce echo.

• If the hard of hearing person does not hear what you have said, try rephrasing it.

• Write things down if need be, particularly important information like dates and times.

• Be patient, and remember that lipreading is difficult and tiring for a number of reasons; only 25-30% of speech is lipreadable in ideal situations; some sounds are invisible on the lips, such as “h” as in “hill”, “g” as in “goat” and “k” as in “kick”; some sounds look exactly the same as others, such as “m” “p” and “b”, as in “man”, “pan” and “ban”.

• To get an idea of the difficulties of lipreading, try watching a newreader on TV with the sound turned down!
Specialist Equipment for the home

Have any of these happened to you?

• You have missed a friend, caller or delivery because you did not hear the doorbell?
• You have given up on a telephone call because you could not hear the instructions on an automated telephone system?
• You have slept in because you did not hear the alarm clock?
• Someone has got annoyed with you because of the volume of your TV?
• Someone has said “never mind, it doesn’t matter” when you have missed part of a conversation?

These experiences can be upsetting, and are all too common for people with a hearing loss. However, solutions can be found in the use of specialist equipment for hard of hearing people. Below is an overview of equipment and services that are available:

Induction Loop systems
These enable hard of hearing people to hear a spoken message directly via their hearing aid.

Loops are effective in reducing background noise and provide much more clarity. They can be used in conversation, to listen to television, radio and music systems, as well as outside the home in meetings, one-to-one consultations and at reception desks.

Listening devices
There is a variety of specialist equipment to help you talk to friends and family, listen to television, radio or enjoy music, including personal loop systems and systems that use infra red technology.

Alerting devices
These use lights or vibrating pads to alert you to a variety of things including doorbells, smoke detectors, baby alarms and alarm clocks.

Telephones
There is a variety of adapted telephones available, including those that use amplification, those that incorporate induction loops and text telephones (sometimes called Minicom).

SMS texting/Mobile phones
Some mobile phones can work with your hearing aids on the loop setting and/or have increased amplification and powerful speakerphone functions. There are also neckloops and ear hooks that can be used with mobile phones to enable you to hear on a mobile phone. Texting enables you to type and receive short messages on your mobile phone, which can be very effective in enabling you to keep in touch with friends and family.
**Text Relay** is a national telephone relay service for deaf and speech impaired people (formerly known as RNID Type Talk). If you are using a textphone or you are calling someone from a standard telephone and think the person at the other end may have a textphone, Text Relay will connect you. It is a fully automated service so, when required, relay operators provide a text-to-voice and voice-to-text translation service.

If you are deaf and use a textphone to call someone using a standard voice telephone, dial 18001 followed by the full dialing code and telephone number. This will put you in touch with an operator who will relay your typed message to the person you are calling. If you are using a standard voice telephone, and expect that the person answering uses a textphone, dial 18002 followed by the full dialing code and telephone number. This will put you in touch with an operator who will use a textphone to type your spoken message to the deaf person.

Calls are charged at your telecommunications provider’s standard rates. You may also be able to get a refund from your provider for the text part of your call. All calls are confidential and the service operates 24 hours every day.

**Specialist Equipment providers**

**Fife Council Specialist Equipment Service**
You may be eligible for some pieces of equipment, supplied on free loan from Fife Council Occupational Therapy Department, subject to a referral and assessment process. In order to meet the criteria for this service, you must wear hearing aids issued by the NHS and have been seen by Audiology within the last 18 months. To find out more about this service, contact your local Occupational Therapy Department between the hours of 9am-11am, Monday - Friday, and ask to speak to the person on duty.

**BT Try Before You Buy Scheme**
Deaf Action’s Including You Project in Fife is a BT Try Before You Buy Centre. You can make an appointment with our worker to get specialist advice, and to see and try a variety of telephones to find the right one to suit your needs, in a friendly, non-sales environment. To make an appointment, contact Deaf Action’s Including You Project in Fife.

Some equipment is available for purchase, such as doorbells and alarm clocks, from stores like B&Q and Argos, or from specialist suppliers including Deaf Action’s Specialist Equipment Service, Connevans and RNID Solutions, who provide catalogues and websites.

**Assistance Dogs**
Some people find that hearing dogs provide great benefit in terms of maintaining independence and providing companionship, whether in the home or out in public. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People train dogs to alert deaf people to specific sounds, such as the alarm clock, doorbell, telephone or smoke alarm. You can apply for a hearing dog if you are severely hard of hearing or profoundly deaf. To apply for a dog, you need to be able to provide proper exercise, grooming, food and medical care (help may be given if this is difficult for you), and be willing to build a working partnership with the dog.
Information, Advice and Guidance

Deaf Action’s Including You Project provides information, advice and guidance on a range of topics and issues to improve your quality of life. Project workers have produced this resource to ensure that you have access to the full range of available services and information for hard of hearing people in Fife. Workers also provide:

- One-to-one advice, in your own home if necessary
- Advice on maintaining your hearing aids
- Welfare benefits checks
- Information on other available services
- Support in the workplace, and advice to employers
- Courses on topics such as mobile phone texting, building confidence, and helping family and friends communicate with you more effectively

“Your (mobile phone texting) classes have lessened our isolation, given us confidence, and taught us a new skill.”

Throughout this guide, contact details for services printed in *bold italic* can be found in Section 8, Contact Details, alphabetical list.
disabilities, including hard of hearing people, in decision-making and working towards inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of society in Fife. By meeting together, members share common experiences, overcome isolation and gain confidence to speak out. The Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) is a Scotland-wide umbrella body that works with many deaf organisations across the country. As part of their work to provide comprehensive information to deaf people, they publish regular newsletters and bulletins, which aim to keep deaf people up-to-date with local and national developments. Contact SCoD to join their information mailing list, or access bulletins online at www.scod.org.uk/bulletins

Benefits
You may be eligible for a range of welfare benefits such as Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. If you need further information about benefits, Deaf Action’s Including You Project Worker can assist you. They can give you specific information on benefits available, help you make an application for a benefit and help you to challenge a decision.

“I had my phone for ages but didn’t know how to use it. I’m now regularly texting my grandchildren!”
Whether you have been deaf for a long time, or you lost your hearing more recently, coping with hearing loss in the workplace can present particular challenges. You might fear that you will not be able to carry out the tasks that you used to, for example using the telephone, or taking part in meetings, and this can leave you feeling vulnerable.

In many cases, difficulties arise because employers do not know what their responsibilities are, what type of support is available, or where to get advice. In fact, there is a range of support available to workers and employers, to enable you to continue successfully in your job.

The legislative context
The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) provides protection in the workplace against discrimination on the grounds of deafness, where your hearing loss can be described as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. The Act says that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against you:

• in the terms of employment offered
• in the opportunities for promotion, transfer, training or receiving any other benefit
• by refusing to offer you, or deliberately not offering, any such opportunity; or
• by dismissing you, or subjecting you to any other negative treatment

If you feel you have suffered discrimination on the grounds of your hearing loss, you can contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission, who operate a helpline and provide a range of advice and support.
Organisations providing support

**Access to Work** is a government-funded service that can help if your hearing loss affects the way you do your job. The service gives you and your employer advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs. Your employer may be required to contribute to the cost of support. Access to Work may pay towards equipment, adapting premises to meet your needs or providing a support worker. For someone with a hearing loss, this could mean, for example, providing an adapted telephone, or listening devices for meetings. It could mean installing a loop system in your workplace, or providing a communication support worker. More details about communication support and how it can be used in the workplace are provided on page 14. These types of support can be crucial to how you cope at work, and it is your right to have access to them.

**Deaf Action’s Including You Project** Worker can meet you to discuss any concerns about how your hearing loss affects your work, and help you to overcome any problems. The worker can liaise with your employer and work colleagues if appropriate, and help provide practical solutions, to help you get the support you are entitled to.

**Fife Employability Network** is a partnership of statutory and voluntary agencies in Fife working with and for people with disabilities. The Network aims to raise awareness of the skills people with disabilities can bring to the workplace to make it easier for them to find and keep jobs or take part in learning. The network provides:

- FenLink, an information and signposting service, which puts you in touch with the person or agency who can best help you if you are looking for information and advice on anything to do with employment, skills and training. See [www.fifedirect.org.uk/fenlink](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/fenlink)
- Kit for Work, an assistive technology loan scheme, which supports people with disabilities starting or trying to stay in work by lending assistive technology until a permanent arrangement can be made.
- A free Directory of Opportunities for Disabled People in Fife, which gives an overview and contact details for over 100 disability organisations in Fife and beyond.
- An email Vacancy Circulation Service, which helps job seekers in Fife with disabilities access job vacancy information by emailing vacancy information straight to your mailbox.
Communication Support
There is a variety of communication support available to assist with communication between deaf and hearing people. This can be of great benefit to people in the workplace, for example in meetings, supervision and training. All professional communication support staff operate a strict code of practice, including confidentiality.

In the workplace, communication support can be funded by Access to Work (see page 13). For other settings such as health or council appointments, it is normally the responsibility of the service provider to pay for communication support.

Below you will find information on the types of communication support that may be of use to people with an acquired hearing loss. Information on communication support for people who use British Sign Language, or are deafblind can be found at www.deafaction.org

Lipspeakers
- are used by people who use lipreading as their main method of communication
- are trained to reproduce the shape, flow, rhythm, stress and phrasing of speech used by the speaker
- convey a speaker’s message to a lipreader without using their voice
- use facial expression, gesture, and if requested, fingerspelling to aid in the lipreader’s understanding

Notetakers - electronic and manual
- write or type everything that is said during proceedings
- aim to ensure as full a coverage of information as possible (in negotiation with the wishes of the deaf person)
- are trained in speed and clarity
- may use a laptop which is connected to another laptop, on which the deaf person reads the transcription
- may use a laptop which is connected to a large screen in a conference / meeting setting, from which many deaf people in an audience can read the transcription
Deaf Awareness Training

Sometimes specialist Deaf Awareness training can be helpful in the workplace, to enable colleagues to learn what they can do to ensure that you are included, like anyone else in your workplace. This could involve training on topics such as communication tactics and specialist equipment. *Deaf Action’s Training Team* can provide this service, tailoring the training to the particular work environment. In some circumstances, *Access to Work* may fund such training.

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**Speedtext operators**

- use a laptop which is connected to another laptop, on which the deaf person reads the transcription
- use specialist computer software
- may summarise what is being said

**Communication Support Provision in Fife**

*Fife Council Deaf Communication Service* is part of Fife Council Social Work Service, promoting access for Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people. The team can organise and provide lipspeakers and other communication support including British Sign Language / English interpreters and deafblind guide-communicators for all kinds of meetings.

The team also provide advice and support to people with a hearing loss and their families and carers. Deaf Awareness, Interpreter Awareness and British Sign Language training are also available, as well as information regarding how to make mainstream services more accessible to people with a hearing loss.
Mainstream learning providers
There is a wealth of adult learning providers who offer a broad range of courses including evening and leisure courses, vocational training, further and higher education. Each of these providers has a responsibility, under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), to help meet your needs to access their courses, and to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to their provision in order for you to participate. This might include provision of specialist equipment in the learning environment, such as a loop system, or communication support. See page 8 for information on equipment, and page 14 for communication support that may benefit you. Before you enroll on a mainstream course, you should contact the learning provider to let them know your needs and allow time for them to make the necessary arrangements. Many learning providers, including colleges and universities, have dedicated staff to assess and make arrangements to meet your needs. They may have a variety of job titles such as Access Officer or Disability Adviser.

Paying for your learning
Grants may be awarded by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland to help meet the extra course costs you can face as a direct result of a disability, including hearing loss. To apply for financial help through Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs), both you and your chosen course must meet some conditions. You will need to check with the education provider that your course is eligible before making your application. Eligible full-time, part-time and postgraduate students can apply for DSAs. The amount you get does not depend on your household income. DSAs are paid on top of the standard student finance package, and do not have to be paid back. The allowances can help pay for specialist support you need for studying - for example, assistive listening devices and non-medical helpers, such as a notetaker. You can apply if you are doing a full time course that lasts at least one year (including a distance-learning course) or a part-time course that lasts at least one year and does not take more than twice as long to complete as an equivalent full time course.

You may also be eligible for financial support to assist in paying for your class through an Individual Learning Account (ILA). ILA Scotland is a Scottish Government scheme that helps you pay for learning that you can do at a time, place, pace and in a way to suit you. It is for people who have an income of £22,000 a year or less, or who are on benefits. If you are 16 or over, you could get up to £500 towards the cost of learning with a learner account from ILA Scotland.
Specialist learning providers

Lipreading Classes
Some people, both deaf and hearing, have unrealistic expectations about lipreading. In fact, lipreading is not an “exact science” that you can learn in order to overcome all your communication difficulties. Rather, it is a set of skills and strategies that you can use to enhance your ability to understand what others are saying. Bear in mind some of the points on page 7:

• only 25-30% of speech is lip readable in ideal situations
• some sounds are invisible on the lips, such as “h” as in “hill”, “g” as in “goat” and “k” as in “kick”
• some sounds look exactly the same as others, such as “m” “p” and “b”, as in “man”, “pan” and “ban”

That said, improving your lipreading skills can have a dramatic impact on your communication. Lipreading classes teach you to make the most of your lipreading skills and are also an opportunity to learn about different services and organisations. Another vital aspect of classes is the opportunity to meet other people who have a hearing loss and share experiences and coping strategies. Classes tend to be small in size and often have guest speakers to share information with you on hearing loss and coping strategies. The class usually lasts for about two hours and allows you to have fun while learning, and to discuss issues around your hearing loss with others who understand.

There are Lipreading classes in Fife which any hard of hearing person can access. You may be eligible for funding for your course via an Individual Learning Account – see page 16.

Hearing Concern LINK Scotland runs self-management courses for people with an acquired hearing loss, and their spouses or supporters. The courses aim to help people adapt to their new circumstances, and equip them with skills and information to improve their quality of life.

Kirkcaldy Hard of Hearing Group meets on the first and third Thursday of the month, between 10a.m. and noon in Kirkcaldy. Hard of hearing people meet with others to share information, advice and learn about what services are available to them in Fife, and beyond. They have guest speakers, and the opportunity to share with others who understand the difficulties a hard of hearing person faces in everyday life.

Deaf Action’s Including You Project offers specialist courses which can help improve the quality of life of hard of hearing people. Workers can offer courses on topics such as how to maintain your hearing aid, how to cope confidently with your hearing loss and how to use mobile phones to send and receive text messages.
Lead Scotland, (Specialists in Linking Education and Disability), is a voluntary organisation which aims to widen access to learning for disabled young people and adults and carers across Scotland, including those who are hard of hearing. The organisation, which employs a Learning Co-ordinator in Fife, can provide guidance on a range of learning opportunities, and support you in your chosen course of study. Learners are supported to develop their own action plan, and may be supported by a trained Lead volunteer:

“I love my course and I get a lot out of meeting others in the same situation”
Section 1 provides more information about NHS services relating to Audiology and your hearing loss. This section provides more general information about health services for people with a hearing loss and how to access them.

Barriers to healthcare
Visiting the GP or other health appointments can present particular challenges to hard of hearing people. Research by the RNID (A Simple Cure? 2004) showed that:

• 28% of deaf and hard of hearing people found it difficult to contact their GP surgery to get an appointment because of their hearing loss
• 15% of deaf and hard of hearing people said they avoid going to see their GP because of communication problems
• 24% of patients had missed an appointment because of poor communication, such as not being able to hear staff calling out their name
• 42% of deaf and hard of hearing people who had visited hospital (non emergency) had found it difficult to communicate with NHS staff
• 35% of deaf and hard of hearing people had been left unclear about their condition because of communication problems with their GP or nurse

Deaf Action’s own survey and report, “Speaking Up” (2008), found that hard of hearing people continue to struggle with communication as a result of poor deaf awareness on the part of service providers.

“My doctor keeps forgetting I have a hearing loss. He talks and doesn’t move his lips”

“(They) tend to speak slowly to begin and then go off at a rate. I usually end up agreeing with them – it’s easier”.

“I tell my dentist I have to lipread but he still talks to me with his mask on. I can hear a sound but I don’t know what he is saying. It makes me quite cross”

Experiences such as these can have a major, negative impact on confidence and independence, and can reduce effective access to healthcare.

Section 5
Health
You may prefer to ask health professionals to make sure they write down important information for you at your appointment, such as details of how to take medication. Many health professionals may be unaware of how best to communicate with you, and may appreciate if you provide a copy of the communication guidelines on page 7. Some hard of hearing people find it helpful to tell GP practice staff to mark your file with a note or sticker indicating that you are hard of hearing. This can ensure that instead of simply calling your name at an appointment, for example, they approach you personally to tell you when it is time for your appointment.

Solutions
Health services including hospitals, GPs, dentists and opticians have a statutory duty to enable you to access their services. This could mean provision of communication support such as a lipspeaker or notetaker for appointments. When making an appointment with a health professional, you can ask staff to book a lipspeaker or notetaker to enable you to communicate effectively with the practitioner. In Fife, this free service is provided by Fife Council Deaf Communication Service. See page 14 for more information on communication support available to you.

Many healthcare settings now have induction loops fitted at the reception area, and sometimes in consulting rooms. It is very common, however, that these are not working, not charged, or the reception staff are not aware of how to use them. If that is the case, the loop provider should be able to provide advice to staff on how to operate the loop.
Accessible emergency contacts and related information

Getting the help you need in an emergency can be a real concern for people who are hard of hearing because of difficulties using the traditional methods of communication. You might find it useful to save the details below, such as mobile phone numbers in your phone, so you can easily access them in case of emergency.

**Text Relay**
This is a national telephone relay service for people with a hearing loss who use a textphone (formerly known as RNID Type Talk). See page 9 for more details of this service. By dialing 18000 on its own, and using your textphone, you will be put in direct contact with the emergency services.

**Fife Police SMS service**
You can register your mobile phone number with the Force Contact Centre at Police HQ, which will enable you to use the SMS mobile phone texting service to access the police. You can get a registration form from Fife Council Deaf Communication Service, then complete and return it to the Force Contact Centre at Police HQ. You will then be given a mobile number which will connect you through to the 999 service by SMS texting.
Emergency SMS 999 Service
This service, which is being piloted at time of publication, allows deaf people across the UK to send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire and rescue, or coastguard. If this trial is a success, a permanent emergency SMS 999 service will be launched.
Like the Fife Police SMS Service texting service, you need to register your mobile phone before using the trial emergency SMS service. Do this by going to www.emergencysms.org.uk
How we hear
During normal hearing, sound goes into the outer ear, passes through the middle ear where the auditory bones, the ossicles, stretch across the middle ear cavity to conduct sound from the eardrum to the inner ear. The sound is then processed by the inner ear before being sent as signals to your brain.

When sound waves enter the fluid of the cochlea in the inner ear, they move tiny hair cells, which then send electrical messages to the auditory nerve. Different frequencies of sound are picked up by different hair cells, depending where in the spiral tube they are located. The nerve passes impulses to your brain, which recognises them as different sounds such as speech, music, footsteps, etc.

About acquired hearing loss
Acquired hearing loss is a very common condition, affecting an estimated one in six people at some point in their lives. In Fife alone, it is estimated that there are over 60,000 people with a hearing loss. The incidence of acquired hearing loss increases with age, to the extent that three quarters of people over the age of seventy have a hearing loss.

Conductive hearing loss - outer or middle ear problems
Conductive hearing loss can be caused by sound being unable to pass through the outer or middle ear. This may be because of:

- Restricted movement of the auditory bones in the middle ear, known as otosclerosis
- Hole in the ear drum, known as perforation
- Ear wax
- Glue ear – most commonly found in children

Sensorineural hearing loss - inner ear problems
This is caused by damage to the tiny hair cells within the cochlea in the inner ear. Sensorineural hearing loss is the most common cause of acquired hearing loss. Damage can be caused by a number of factors including:

- The ageing process
- Exposure to loud noise
- Traumatic injury such as a fall or a head injury
- Illness or infections such as measles, mumps or meningitis
- Ototoxic effects, that is, reactions to drugs or medications
Some other conditions

Tinnitus
Tinnitus is experienced as noises inside the head that do not come from an external source, and often sound like buzzing, whistling, hissing or ringing, or sometimes as songs or tunes. If the cochlea hair cells are damaged or overstimulated, this can cause irregular nerve signals to the brain, which perceives it as noise inside the head. Although not life-threatening, it can be extremely upsetting, and is a very common condition, thought to affect about one in ten. About one in a hundred people report that they have had tinnitus that severely affects their quality of life (RNID).

Tinnitus can affect you whether you have a hearing loss or not. It can be caused by hearing disorders related to ageing or exposure to loud noise, and can be affected by emotional upset, injury, illness, and the side effects of some drugs.

There is a range of treatments and therapies that can be useful for people with tinnitus. You can discuss these with your GP or Audiologist.

The British Tinnitus Association can offer advice and support on the condition.

Ménière’s Disease is a disease of the inner ear. It is a long term, progressive disease which damages both the balance and hearing parts of the inner ear. The main symptoms of the disease are vertigo, tinnitus and hearing loss. Your GP can diagnose and offer management strategies for Ménière’s disease, and may refer you to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist for help to manage your symptoms. The Ménière’s Society is a charitable organisation offering advice and information on Ménière’s Disease. Information on treatment and coping strategies can be found on their website.

Hyperacusis is the name given to increased sensitivity to normal level sounds. People with hyperacusis may feel pain or discomfort when hearing sounds that most people are able to tolerate. The causes of the condition are not yet well understood, but it is thought that the problems arise from faulty processing of sound in the inner ear. If you do not have an NHS hearing aid, you can consult your GP for advice and referral to an ENT specialist. Existing NHS hearing aid users can discuss this issue with the Audiology team.
Deafness and dementia

Both deafness and dementia are conditions that become more prevalent with age. Some people who develop dementia will have been deaf from an early age, but for others, both deafness and dementia will have developed in later life. The difficulties which are part of dementia are made much worse when the person cannot hear properly. The response of others to this situation will have a huge effect on how people with deafness and dementia feel and what they are able to do.

In 2004 Deaf Action, in partnership with the University of Stirling Dementia Services Development Centre, carried out research and produced a report on deafness and dementia. The report is available to view via www.deafaction.org, or you can get a copy by contacting our head office. More information on dementia can be found by contacting Alzheimer Scotland, who have a free 24 hour helpline 0808 808 3000 (Text Relay callers can use the 18001 prefix).

Deafblindness

People are regarded as deafblind if they have a severe degree of combined visual and auditory loss resulting in difficulties with communication, mobility and information. Most deafblind people are over the age of 60 and have a dual sensory loss due to ageing. Deafblind Scotland can provide a range of specialist support including project work and a Guide/Communicator service. Guide/Communicators relay information, facilitate communication with others and ensure that the deafblind person is able to get about safely. They enable deafblind people to make informed decisions by ensuring information (spoken, non-verbal, written and environmental) is delivered using the deafblind person’s preferred communication method, such as British Sign Language, Deafblind Manual or hands-on-signing. The service may be funded by your local Social Work department, following an assessment of your needs, which can be carried out by Deafblind Scotland staff. If you have both a hearing and sight loss, you can become a member of Deafblind Scotland, and keep up-to-date with relevant news and information.

Sense Scotland provides services for children and adults who have communication support, information, learning and mobility needs because of deafblindness, sensory impairment, learning and physical disabilities. Working closely with people, often on a one-to-one basis, the organisation aims to find out what their aspirations are and how they want to live their lives. In Fife, the organisation also provides a number of housing support services.
Below is a list of services and contacts that are mentioned in this guide. We have provided as many accessible contact details as possible. Where only a voice phone number is provided, textphone users can use the Text Relay prefix 18001. More details on how this service works are provided on page 9.

**Access to Work**
Jobcentre Plus
Access to Work Operational Support Unit
Anniesland JCP
Baird Street
Glasgow G90 8AN
Tel 0141 950 5327
Text 0845 602 5850
Fax 0141 950 5265
Email atwosu.glasgow@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

**Alzheimer Scotland**
22 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh EH3 7RN
Phone 0131 243 1453
Fax 0131 243 1450
Email alzheimer@alzscot.org

24 hour Dementia Helpline
Freephone 0808 808 3000

**British Tinnitus Association**
Ground Floor, Unit 5
Acorn Business Park
Woodseats Close
Sheffield S8 0TB
Freephone Helpline 0800 018 0527

**Connevans**
54 Albert Road North
Reigate
Surrey RH2 9YR
Tel 01737 247 571
Text 01737 243 134
Fax 01737 223 475
Email info@connevans.com
Web www.connevans.co.uk

**Deaf Action**
Main contact details
49 Albany Street
Edinburgh EH1 3QY
Tel 0131 556 3128
Text 0131 557 0419
Fax 0131 557 8283
SMS 07775 620 757
Email admin@deafaction.org
Videophone 82.71.100.121
Web www.deafaction.org

**Deaf Action’s Including You Project**
Fife Sensory Impairment Centre
13 Wilson Avenue
Kirkcaldy KY2 5EF
Mobile/SMS 07775 838 338
Email kirsteen.mcfarlane@deafaction.org
fife@deafaction.org

Text 0114 258 5694
Fax 0114 258 2279
Email info@tinnitus.org.uk
Web www.tinnitus.org.uk
Deaf Action’s Specialist Equipment Service
49 Albany Street
Edinburgh EH1 3QY
Tel 0131 556 3128
Text 0131 557 0419
Fax 0131 557 8283
SMS 07775 620 757
Videophone 82.71.100.121
Email specialistequipment@deafaction.org

Deafblind Scotland
21 Alexandra Avenue
Lenzie
Glasgow G66 5BG
Tel/Text 0141 777 6111
Fax 0141 775 3311
Helpline 0800 132 320
Email info@deafblindsscotland.org.uk
Web www.deafblindscotland.org.uk

Emergency SMS 999 Service
Register your mobile phone at
www.emergencysms.org.uk
You can then text 999 in an emergency.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow G2 8DU
Tel 0141 228 5910
Fax 0141 228 5912
Email scotland@equalityhumanrights.com
Web www.equalityhumanrights.com/scotland

EHRC also operate a helpline for information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues:
Helpline 0845 604 5510
Text 0845 604 5520
Fax 0845 604 5530
Opening hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 am-6:00 pm

Fife Council Deaf Communication Service
Social Work Service
16 East Fergus Place
Kirkcaldy KY1 1XT
Tel 01592 583 341
Text 01592 583 340
Fax 01592 583 259
Mobile 07985 761 908
Email swinfo.deafcommunications@fife.gov.uk
Web www.fifedirect.org.uk
Fife Council Occupational Therapy

Cowdenbeath Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
70 Stenhouse Street
Cowdenbeath KY4 9DD
Tel 01383 602 201
Fax 01383 602 202

Cupar Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
Castlehill
Cupar KY15 4HA
Tel 01334 659 322
Fax 01334 659 464

Glenrothes Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
390 South Street
Glenrothes KY7 5NL
Tel 01592 583 321
Fax 01592 583 262

Kirkcaldy Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
16 Fergus Place
Kirkcaldy KY1 1XT
Tel 01592 583 322
Fax 01592 583 263

Leven Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
12 Station Road
Leven KY8 4QU
Tel 01334 659 323
Fax 01334 659 465

Rosyth Social Work Office
Occupational Therapy Service
Park Road
Rosyth KY11 2JL
Tel 01383 602 203
Fax 01383 602 205

Fife Employability Network
Fife Council Local and Community Services
3-5 Weymssfield
Kirkcaldy KY1 1XN
Tel 01592 583 378
Email info@fenlink.org.uk
Web www.fifedirect.org.uk/fenlink

Fife Independent Disability Network
West Bridge Mill
Bridge Street
Kirkcaldy
Fife KY1 1TE
Tel 01592 203 993
Fax 01592 203 786
Text 01952 646 885
Email enquiries@fidn.co.uk
Web www.fidn.org.uk

Fife Police SMS Service
Fife Constabulary
Headquarters
Detroit Road
Glenrothes KY6 2RJ
Tel 0845 600 5702
Fax 01592 418444
Email contact@fife.pnn.police.uk

Or contact Fife Council Deaf Communication Service to register with this service

Hearing Concern LINK Scotland
The Eric Liddell Centre
15 Morningside Road
Edinburgh EH10 4DP
Tel 0131 447 9420
Email Scotland@hearingconcernlink.org
Web www.hearingconcernlink.org

Hearing Concern LINK also have a helpdesk that people can contact during office hours.
Tel 01323 638 230
Text 01323 739998
Fax 01323 642 968
Mob/SMS 07526 123 255
Email helpdesk@hearingconcernlink.org
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
The Grange
Wycombe Road
Saunderton
Princes Risborough
Bucks HP27 9NS
Tel 01844 348 100
Fax 01844 348 101
Email info@hearing-dogs.co.uk
Web www.hearing-dogs.co.uk

ILA Scotland
PO Box 26833
Glasgow G2 9AN
Tel 0808 100 1090
Email enquiries@ilascotland.org.uk

Kirkcaldy Hard of Hearing Group
Social Work Service
16 East Fergus Place
Kirkcaldy KY1 1XT
Tel 01592 583 272
Fax 01592 583 273

Lead Scotland
Lead Scotland
Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4RG
Tel 0131 333 666
Email drobb@lead.org.uk

Lipreading classes
Linda Johnstone
Lipreading Tutor
Classes held during daytime in Elmwood College, Cupar & Kirkcaldy
Tel 01592 720432
Email lipreading_lj@yahoo.co.uk

Alison Pendowski
Lipreading Tutor
Classes held in the evenings at Dunfermline High School Community Use.
Tel Dunfermline High School Community Use 01383 602348
Email alison@pendowski.plus.com

Meniere’s Society
The Ménière’s Society
The Rookery
Surrey Hills Business Park
Wotton, Dorking
Surrey RH5 6QT
Tel Helpline 0845 120 2975
Text 01306 876 883
Fax 01306 876 057
Email info@menieres.org.uk
Web www.menieres.org.uk
NHS Audiology Departments and Repair Clinics

Barrie Street Clinic
Barrie Street
Methil KY8 3BU

Cupar Health Centre
Out Patients Department
Bank Street
Cupar KY15 4JN

King’s Cross Hospital
Clepngton Road
Dundee DD3 8EA
Tel 01382 660 111
Fax 01382 816 178

Queen Margaret Hospital
Audiology Department
Whitefield Road
Dunfermline KY12 0SU
Tel 01383 623 623

St Andrews Community Hospital
Out Patients Department
Largo Road
St Andrews KY16 8AR
Tel 01334 465 656

St Andrews Community Hospital
Out Patients Department
Largo Road
St Andrews KY16 8AR
Tel 01334 465 656

Victoria Hospital
Audiology Department
Hayfield Road
Kirkcaldy KY2 5AH
Tel 01592 643 355

Princess Royal Trust Fife Carers Centre
157 Commercial Street
Kirkcaldy KY1 2NS
Tel 01592 642 999
Fax 01592 263 910
Email centre@fifecarers.co.uk
Web www.fifecarerscentre.org.uk

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)
RNID Scotland
Empire House
131 West Nile Street
Glasgow G1 2RX
Tel 0141 342 5347
Text 0141 341 5330
Fax 0141 354 0176
Email rnidscotland@rnid.org.uk
Web www.rnid.org.uk

RNID Solutions
Tel 01733 361 161
Text 01733 238 020
Fax 01733 361 199
Email solutions@rnid.org.uk
Web www.rnid.org.uk

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD)
Central Chambers
Suite 62
93 Hope Street
Glasgow G2 6LD
Tel 0141 248 2474
Text 0141 248 2477 and 1854
Fax 0141 248 2479
Email admin@scod.org.uk
Web www.scod.org.uk
Sense Scotland
43 Middlesex Street
Kinning Park
Glasgow G41 1EE

Tel 0141 429 0294
Text 0141 418 7170
Fax 0141 429 0295
Email info@sensescotland.org.uk
Web www.sensescotland.org.uk

Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Gyleview House
3 Redheughs Rigg
Edinburgh EH12 9HH

Fax 0131 244 5887
Tel 0845 111 0244
Disabled student enquiries
Web www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

Text Relay (Telephone relay service)

(voice) 18002
(text) 18001
(emergency) 18000

Customer Support
Tel 0800 500 888
Text 0800 500 888
Email helpline@textrelay.org
Web www.textrelay.org