

Supporting people with hearing loss 2016 – 2020



"North Regional Association for Sensory Support"



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Welcome to our Second Deaf and Hard of Hearing Strategy

This strategy is important to you if you live in Hartlepool and require support and advice on health and social care services.

It will help to shape how we work with local people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to ensure they are engaged in securing a healthier future for us all.

We developed this strategy with the support and co-operation of the local Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and as such it reflects what is most important to those who live, work and contribute to Hartlepool's continued success.

We are committed to working with our partners to deliver better services to people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and I am proud to announce that Hartlepool was one of the first areas in the country to develop a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Strategy.

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher
Leader of the Council
Hartlepool Borough Council

By involving Hartlepool's Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in the development of their second hearing loss strategy, Hartlepool Borough Council has given a voice to a group of people who often go unheard.

Basing the strategy on the Care Act 2014 wellbeing principles has helped to ensure that each and every aspect of life that impacts on a person's health and wellbeing has been considered. Where gaps in services have been identified, actions have been devised to help address them.

Also, I am sure it is reassuring for local people with hearing loss to know that Hartlepool Borough Council will continue to support Hartlepool Deaf Centre and the Northern Regional Association for Sensory Support (NRASS) in the provision of services aimed at improving their health and wellbeing.

Wendy Harrison
Co-ordinator, Hartlepool Deaf Centre

Introduction

The aim of this 'Supporting People with Hearing Loss' strategy is to ensure that the needs of people in Hartlepool who are Deaf, Deafened and hard of hearing are included in the planning and development of services in the town, and have their needs met by all agencies including Hartlepool Borough Council, the local NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The strategy has been developed by Hartlepool Borough Council following a programme of consultation and engagement. The strategy will use the term 'hearing loss' to refer to all of the following groups:

- **Hard of Hearing** Those for whom hearing loss is usually acquired in later life. People who are hard of hearing are usually defined as having a deficit of at least 25dB in their better ear. They comprise the largest group of people with hearing loss.

- **Deaf** The use of this term with a capital D is used to define those who communicate predominantly through British Sign Language (BSL). Deaf people see themselves not as being disabled but as belonging to a distinct community with a common language and cultural history. With English being a second language, some Deaf people may have difficulty reading English and have a low reading age.

- **deaf** The use of this term, with a lowercase 'd' is often used as a generic term for those who are both hard of hearing, Deafened or Deaf.

- **Deafened** Deafened people are those who have suffered a profound hearing loss later in life and have usually acquired oral skills, using spoken English as their first language.

- **Deafblind** Those who are Deafblind have dual sensory loss which they may have experienced since birth, or alternatively, as a result of Usher's syndrome which results in hearing loss and blindness in later life.

» Background

Hearing loss can have a significant impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. For children who are born with a hearing impairment, their language development, educational attainment and life chances can be affected. For adults with sudden or age-acquired hearing loss, there is the risk of loss of employment, social isolation, depression and mental health problems.

Just over 16% of the population suffer a hearing loss. This amounts to 1 in 6 people or around 14,700 people in Hartlepool.

» Consultation and Engagement

The strategy has been co-produced using the 'Working Together for Change' methodology. The vision of co-production can only be realised by empowering people who use services, their carers and families to play a leading role in shaping and driving the changes they want to see.



Hartlepool Borough Council commissioned a review using the 8 step process of 'Working Together for Change' with people in Hartlepool, and as a result, identified a number of recommendations for how services could be improved. The recommendations were grouped into 8 categories to reflect the Care Act 2014 wellbeing principles:

1. Living at Home
2. Looking after someone
3. Housing options and care
4. Keeping safe
5. Getting out and about and Socialising
6. Keeping Healthy
7. Money Matters
8. Working and Learning

These recommendations were considered by Hartlepool Borough Council's Adult Services Committee and the committee agreed to the development of this strategy, which looks at how support can be offered to the 1 in 6 people, or 14,700 people who are thought to have a hearing loss in Hartlepool.

The strategy has been developed around the key recommendations outlined above and the priorities for actions identified in the consultation. The strategy is structured to outline the policy objectives and what actions will be taken to support each recommendation.

Whilst the development of this strategy has been led by Hartlepool Borough Council, its aim is to work with partners including Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), private providers and the voluntary and community sector to build on the services that are currently provided (Appendix 1).

It will not be achieved in isolation and will work alongside other strategies and policies such as:

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Moving Forward Together – the vision for adult social care in Hartlepool
- Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees – 5 year future vision

The strategy is linked to and will be monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board and will help support the Board's key aim:

“To work in partnership with the people of Hartlepool to promote and ensure the best possible health and wellbeing.”

Policy objectives

» Policy objective 1: Living at home

People said:

A number of people reported having old 'alarm' systems fitted in their home, some reported that these systems were not checked, looked cumbersome or were in a state of disrepair. One lady said her doorbell kept breaking and she'd had someone from the sensory loss team come and check it and give her a new battery, however it still kept breaking down.

Some people reported having to disconnect their smoke detectors or burglar alarms citing complaints from neighbours when they went off and delays in resetting the system as the person was not able to detect (hear) this.

People we consulted felt there was limited information and advice available from the Local Authority. People don't always know who to contact if equipment breaks down.

Our response:

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide universal access to good quality information; the local authority must ensure that information and advice services established cover more than just basic information about care and support. The service should also address, prevention of care and support needs, finances, health, housing, employment, what to do in cases of abuse or neglect of an adult and other areas where required. In fulfilling this duty, local authorities should consider the people they are communicating with on a case by case basis, and seek to actively encourage them towards the type of information and/or advice that may be particularly relevant to them.

Action on Hearing are just one of several organisations who have alarm options available that have been designed specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

<http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop/alerting/smoke--and--fire-and-carbon-monoxide-detectors.aspx>

Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- Develop an online web-based service that will be linked to a range of community equipment options for the home, giving local citizens the option to review products from a number of sources.
- Develop a texting service so people can raise an alert in respect of faulty or damaged equipment. Ensure sensory loss equipment is included as part of an annual review.

» Policy objective 2: Looking after someone

People said:

People found very few care organisations had invested in BSL training for their staff. Carers of deaf people often felt they were being used as unofficial interpreters and this had implications for their relationships and impacted on their day to day lives.

People were unaware of the new duties under the Care Act 2014, the new rights for carers and the new national eligibility criteria.

Our response

HBC has committed additional resources within the contact centre to increase the uptake of BSL trained staff, a trial of the Sign Video service was unsuccessful although in hindsight this could have been better communicated to members of the public.

The Care Act 2014 places new duties on Local Authorities to ensure carers receive the same recognition, respect and parity of esteem with those they support.

Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- HBC will continue to offer training to staff within the contact centre and wider public information points.
- HBC will ensure carers are acknowledged and valued as expert partners in care and are offered a carers assessment where the carer appears to have such needs.
- HBC will continue to commission the Northern Regional Association for Sensory Support service based at Cafe one 77.

» Policy objective 3: Housing Options and Care

People said:

People we consulted felt in the main they were settled in homes they had invested in over many years. A small group felt that it could be beneficial to develop a small 'deaf friendly housing scheme'. Some people had visited a deaf scheme near Durham and felt that residents had created their own community and were therefore less likely to feel socially isolated.

People said it was very important that care staff providing support in care homes and supported accommodation learn level one BSL, so that they can communicate with their clients – otherwise deaf clients could feel isolated, misunderstood and frustrated.

People also felt, care staff should have training in deaf awareness and hearing loss equipment e.g. how to change a hearing aid battery and how doorbells for people with hearing loss work.

Our response:

There are good working links with most of the housing providers in the town and in the main properties are adapted on a case by case basis and fitted with equipment as per individual requirements. However HBC recognised the need to support the local public and would explore further the benefits of a small deaf housing project. HBC will also work on improving the uptake of BSL training in registered care provision.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- HBC will seek further clarification of the need for a small deaf focused housing scheme.
- HBC will raise the issue of BSL training at a Hartlepool Provider Forum meeting.
- HBC will seek to skill up reviewing officers to be proficient in the maintenance of sensory loss equipment.

» Policy objective 4: Keeping safe

People said:

Some people we talked to said they had developed a hearing loss in later life as a result of working in noisy industrialised setting in the past. People in the main were not made aware of noise related hearing loss. Other people said they felt more vulnerable in the community and would not travel far at night, often missing out on events and social outings as transport was an issue.

Our response:

Feeling secure in our home and feeling confident whilst out in your local neighbourhood is one of the most important things for any resident living in Hartlepool. The Safer Hartlepool Partnership vision is to work together with local residents to create a safer community for the future of the town.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- Continue to progress the work that commenced in 2011 to support members of the Deaf Centre at Cafe One 77.
- We will build on the work of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and look to ensure the needs of people with hearing loss are considered in local plans.

» Policy objective 5: Getting out and about and socialising

People said:

Deaf attendees said they regularly attended events run by Hartlepool Deaf Centre's Focus on Health Project and that they enjoyed events like the art and craft sessions, bowling and the Social Club.

Members said the Social Club was going to return to a monthly slot from April – October, but would continue to be held bi-monthly November – March.

One member said he didn't attend evening events because there is no bus service from Seaton Carew to Hartlepool on an evening.

Our response:

HBC is pleased the Deaf Centre continues to thrive and support the local community and would like to thank its board for continuing to support the local deaf community. It is encouraging to hear that members continue to attend, support and raise the profile of deaf citizens. Access to good public transport is an area that continues to be a high priority for citizens in Hartlepool.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- Continue to support members of the Hartlepool Deaf Centre in campaigning for better services for people.
- HBC will ensure representation of Deaf and people with hearing loss in local transport plans.
- HBC will raise the profile of the 'Safe on the Move in Hartlepool' scheme and the 'Safe Places' scheme.

» Policy objective 6: Keeping Healthy

People said:

People we consulted said they were aware of the Focus on Health project and were happy to provide examples of how they had been supported with particular health conditions. One person said he had been diagnosed as being at risk of developing diabetes and was given support to change his diet. He commented on how he had attended an awareness session with a specialist nurse and this had given him more confidence and understanding of the condition. A number of BSL health video clips have been posted on the Deaf Centre's Facebook page following health sessions.

Our response:

HBC recognise the benefits of being healthy and well, and it is encouraging that the Focus on Health project continues to support people to understand the risks, signs and symptoms of certain health conditions. The health of people in Hartlepool is generally worse than the England average.

Deprivation is higher than average and about 30.6% (5,500) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Priorities in Hartlepool are: reducing smoking prevalence, reducing alcohol related harm and reducing levels of obesity across the population.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- HBC will continue to support the Focus on Health project and will explore how it can directly contribute to improving the health of people in Hartlepool.
- HBC will work with Public Health and the Focus on Health project to better pool resources when supporting wider public health issues.

» Policy objective 7: Money Matters

People said:

Deaf people said they needed support with claiming benefits, such as child tax credits, working tax credits and the new Universal Credit, as you usually have to phone up to claim them. Some people said they were already using an online debt counselling service called deafPLUS National and the BSL Money Advice Helpline, which can be accessed via Skype or Facetime. People talked to us about the NRASS service at Cafe One 77 and how it had supported a lot of people providing advice on welfare changes.

Our response:

HBC will work with the Northern Regional Association for Sensory Support (NRASS) to ensure the service continues in Hartlepool. It will also look to further develop the Hartlepool Now Website and signpost people to support services. The Care Act 2014 places further duties on Councils to ensure the provide information and advice on welfare benefits and other financial information.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- HBC will continue to provide advice on good money management, help with basic budgeting and debt management.
- HBC will ensure support services are encouraged to sign up to the Hartlepool Now website.

» **Policy objective 8: Working and Learning**

People said:

People told us that they had been offered support and assistance from the Hartlepool Deaf Centre to support them into employment; however they found they received little extra support from Job Centre Plus. People did not know much about the Access to Work Scheme and the benefits for both employers and employees.

Our response:

HBC will look at creating better links with deaf people. Hartlepool Working Solutions based at the Hartlepool Enterprise Centre can offer tailored support and works in partnership with the Job Centre Plus, Disabled Employment Advisors on a range of back to work programmes.

To do this, Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners will:

- Work with deaf people to raise awareness of the services they offer.
- Hartlepool Working Solutions will engage with businesses on the issues of Hearing loss and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Governance

To ensure that our commitment to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities is honoured, we will take this strategy forward by embedding it within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, making people accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board for its delivery.

Health and Wellbeing (Chair)

» The Health and Wellbeing Board voting members (statutory members) are:

- Executive Members of the Local Authority
- Chief Executive
- Representative of Clinical Commissioning Group
- Director of Public Health
- Director of Child and Adult Services
- Healthwatch Hartlepool Board Member

» The non-voting members (non-statutory members) are:

- Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary Sector representative(s)
- North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Cleveland Fire Authority