



Not yet Approved by
The AA General Service Conference in Great Britain

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Helpline 0800 9177 650
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
help@aamail.org

General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ
Telephone (01904) 644026

Stationary Code TBC



All of the points made below have been received from members of our Fellowship to help raise awareness of the needs of hard of hearing AA members.

Many of the problems that arise can be rectified easily, but only if our members are reminded regularly about them. We say often enough that if we want the hand of AA to be there; when we share at meetings, then we need to make sure the voice of AA can be heard by those whose hearing is impaired.

- Deafness, ranging from mild to severe, is one of the most common physical disabilities with which we come into the rooms. It is invisible and therefore the least appreciated – and unfortunately easily forgotten.
- 11 million people (1 in 6) in the UK are deaf or hard of hearing (GOV.UK, 2017).¹
- We as a Fellowship are responsible for carrying the AA message. A hearing impairment may affect a member's ability to receive it.
- It is of vital importance for members with disabilities to make their needs known.
- Remember that our own lack of awareness can be a problem to the hard of hearing whom we are trying to help recover and aid participation in service.
- The greeters and those serving tea and coffee are often in the best position to ascertain whether a newcomer is hard of hearing and can alert the chairperson before the meeting starts.

At Meetings

- We can aid lip reading by having a good level of lighting and ensuring that the speaker can be seen. Candle-lit or darkened meetings can be difficult for the deaf and visually impaired people.
- The chairperson could remind sharers/members that there may be someone who is hard of hearing present. Groups can try to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly and uninterrupted fashion.
- Background noise: kettles, extractor fans, etc. can be switched off.
- Many ordinary community centres and church halls have a built in (but invisible) inductive hearing loop by law. Ask your landlord if your room has one; if so, ask for it to be turned on for your meeting.
- If you are chatting with someone after the meeting and the noise level means it is difficult to hear, try moving somewhere quieter.

At intergroup & region

- Members giving reports might be asked to present them facing the audience.
- Do your service representatives and members make a point of passing on experience through the AA service structure how the message can be carried to hearing impaired members? This experience can be shared either at meetings or by submissions to Share and Roundabout.

¹GOV.UK (2017). Saleem: profoundly deaf user. Statistics about hearing loss. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-disabilities-and-impairments-user-profiles/saleem-profoundly-deaf-user>.