

## Resources:

### Sight and Sound Centres

Talk to a specialist worker. Receive help and advice and try out equipment.

Dorchester Sight and Sound Centre, Dorchester Day Centre  
Acland Road, Dorchester

Wednesday between 10am and 4pm (closed for lunch from 1pm-2pm)

### Don't Lose the Music

[www.dontlosethemusic.com](http://www.dontlosethemusic.com)

### RNID Information Line

(Freephone)  
Telephone 0808 808 0123  
Textphone 0808 808 9000  
[informationline@rnid.org.uk](mailto:informationline@rnid.org.uk)  
[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

### National Association of Deafened People

Paul Tomlinson  
PO Box 50  
Amersham  
HP6 6XB  
0845 055 9663  
Mobile (SMS only): 07527 211 348  
01305 262591  
[enquiries@nadp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nadp.org.uk)

### Booking a registered sign language interpreter

**National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People**  
[www.nrcpd.org.uk](http://www.nrcpd.org.uk)

**Association of Sign Language Interpreters**  
[www.asli.org.uk](http://www.asli.org.uk)

# Hearing impairment factsheet

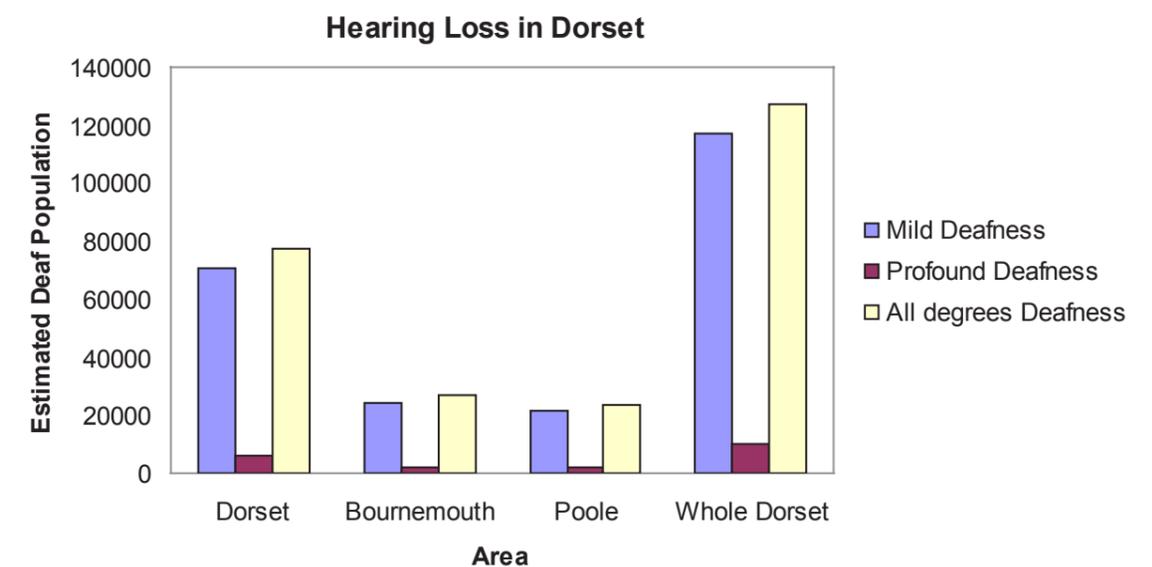
## Definitions of deafness

Mild deafness	The quietest sounds audible in the better ear average between 25 and 39 decibels. People with mild deafness have some difficulty following speech, mainly in noisy situations, on TV, the telephone etc
Moderate deafness	The quietest sounds audible in the better ear average between 40 and 69 decibels. People with moderate deafness have difficulty in following speech without a hearing aid, and great difficulty using the telephone. They will regularly mishear things they thought they heard!
Severe deafness	The quietest sounds audible in the better ear average between 70 and 94 decibels. People with severe deafness struggle to follow speech even with powerful hearing aids and rely a lot on lip-reading, and occasionally on British Sign Language (BSL).
Profound deafness	Either no sensation of sound at all, or no usable sound, even with the most powerful hearing aids. People who are profoundly deaf communicate almost utterly by visual means: Speech-to-Text, lip-reading, sign-supported English, Cued Speech, and BSL. The quietest sounds they can detect in the better ear average 95 decibels or more.

Largely based on Paul N Tomlinson's Deafness briefing to the Dorset Equality and Diversity Forum July 2009



## Deafness Incidence in Dorset Source RNID factsheet



It is estimated that 581 BSL users in Dorset.

People tend to lose their high frequency hearing more rapidly than their low frequency hearing. Unfortunately it is the high frequencies which contain most of the information content of speech.

There is some limited evidence that members of some minority ethnic groups may experience higher levels of deafness. This is especially true of recent immigrants.

There is also some evidence of increased levels of mental health problems amongst the Deaf and hearing impaired community, due both to increased isolation and lack of being able to find suitable and accessible help and treatment.



## Employment effects deafness

In 2002 the RNID carried out a survey into the employment situation and experiences of deaf and hard of hearing people. They found that respondents had an unemployment rate of 19%, which was four times the national average for people who are not deaf or hard of hearing, and not disabled. Nearly a third of those deaf people were in full-time work earned under £10,000 per year, compared to 11.8% of the UK general population.

## Isolating effects of deafness

**Social isolation** - can't converse with neighbours, go to group meetings, can't ring friends and children for a gossip etc. Unable to cope with background noise in restaurants, parties etc. Compounds the isolation resulting from reduced mobility in the elderly.

**Work place isolation** - Not part of the 'water-cooler gossip' culture, can't readily network at meetings or by phone.

**Commercial isolation** - we now live in a world dominated by doing business by phone.

**Only about 35% of people who might benefit from hearing aids have them**



## Deafness with a capital 'D' and British Sign Language

Most people tend to think of Deafness as a disability. This view is often shared by those who become deaf through illness or injury. However, Deaf people who communicate through Sign Language see themselves as part of a distinct community, with a common language and cultural heritage. They often refer to themselves as Deaf with a capital 'D'.

Sign Language is not a universal language. Every country has its own sign language. The language of the Deaf community in the UK is British Sign Language (BSL) which was recognised by the Government as a language in its own right in 2003.

BSL is not a variation of spoken English, still less a degraded version of it. Each Sign Language is a fully formed language in its own right. Deaf people have created poetry, drama, comedy and other forms of cultural expression in Sign Language.

For many, English – including written English – is at best a second language. Research has shown that, because of problems in education, the average Deaf school leaver has a reading age of only nine. So attempting to deal with complex issues with Deaf people though writing is rarely the answer.



## Tinnitus

About 5% of adults (2.3million people) have tinnitus, which they find severely or moderately annoying.

About 5% of adults (2.3million people) have tinnitus, which makes it difficult for them to sleep.

About 1% of adults (470,000 people) have tinnitus that has a severe effect on their quality of life.

About 0.5% of adults (230,000 people) have tinnitus which has a severe effect on their ability to lead a normal life.

Several thousand people in Dorset suffer from serious tinnitus.

## Prevention is better than cure

Use earplugs at discos

Be aware of the damage done by MP3/walkman sound levels

Get regular hearing tests, and make best use of modern hearing aid technology

## Things that are **not helpful** to deaf people

- Converting working methods to view the telephone as the only gateway to access Council services
- IP based telephone networks, which rarely support textphones
- Converting scheduled services to Dial-a-Ride and similar operation
- Entry-phone systems
- Showing phone numbers as a Mandatory field on response forms, web shopping sites etc.

## Things that **are helpful** to deaf people

- Staff who recognise that deafness is a fact of life, and that it's part of their job to ensure that d/Deaf/HoH people can communicate with them effectively
- Alternative enquiry methods for deaf people – fax, text phones, SMS, EM. Avoid a telephone-centric culture!
- The availability of SMS services
- Appropriate forms of Communications Support – Speech-to-Text, Lipspeakers, BSL interpreters etc – are routinely offered both for public events and for individual interviews, and that contracts are in place to deliver them.
- Speak clearly – form words properly and speak at a regular volume. Don't shout – this distorts the voice.
- Maintain a natural rhythm of speech.
- Use plain language, rephrase where necessary
- Hearing aids work best in a quiet environment across a distance of no more than 1.5m and in 1:1 conversations.
- Don't assume a person can lip read! No one can lip read everything and it is extremely tiring.
- The Access to Work scheme to help support d/Deaf/HoH people in the work place.
- Inductive loop systems in all meeting and lecture rooms, ensure that (a) they are switched on, and (b) they have effective microphone arrangements. Have them tested by deaf people!
- TV subtitling on all Council sponsored training DVDs etc.

## Communication top tips

- Take your time
- Explain what is happening
- Be aware of your attitude
- Use basic English if writing questions down
- Offer a pen and paper
- Cut down on background noise
- Make sure the area is well lit
- Don't obstruct your mouth/ face