

Louder than Words
Open up your business
to 10 million people

ACTION ON
HEARING
LOSS

LOUDER

THAN

WORDS



Why equality?

People who are deaf or have hearing loss experience communication barriers when accessing goods and services, as well as in the workplace. This can have far-reaching consequences, leading to isolation and exclusion. With the Louder than Words™ charter mark, you can help prevent this happening.

Equal access is also a legal requirement. Under the Equality Act 2010, service providers and employers have to think ahead to address barriers that prevent equal access for disabled people, including people who are deaf or have hearing loss.

This booklet explains how the Louder than Words™ charter mark can benefit your business, customers and employees – and how straightforward it is to achieve.

Why us?

With over 100 years' experience, we are the market leader in providing advice and services to people with hearing loss.

We have helped thousands of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to become more accessible to people with hearing loss – and some of them have won national awards as a result.

Achieving Louder than Words™

The Louder than Words™ charter mark helps you put in place cost-effective ways of improving accessibility for people with hearing loss. Without them, you might be missing out on potential customers, employees or clients – or not serving the ones you have as well as you could. Louder than Words™ can help with these three easy steps:

- 1.** We will look at your people, your processes and the technology you have in place to see how well you are currently supporting people with hearing loss. Then we will present you with a comprehensive report showing where you already demonstrate good practice, and provide you with an action plan to show where you can make improvements.
- 2.** We will offer you continuing support to apply the recommendations in the action plan within a timescale that meets your needs.
- 3.** At the end of the agreed time, we will carry out an audit to see if you meet our standards. If you are successful, we will award you the Louder than Words™ charter mark. You can then display your certificate to indicate your commitment to improving access for people with hearing loss, and you will be registered on our website.

Did you know?

- There are more than 10 million people in the UK with some form of hearing loss – that's one in six of the population.
- By 2031, it's estimated that there will be 14.5 million people with hearing loss in the UK.
- More than 800,000 people in the UK are severely or profoundly deaf.
- About two million people in the UK have hearing aids, but only 1.4 million use them regularly.
- On average it takes ten years for people to address their hearing loss.



Good for your customers

Good quality customer service is at the core of any business

– whatever your service or business offer, your customers will remember good service and reward it with continued loyalty. Improving accessibility will improve customer retention rates and show your local community that you are committed to social responsibility. Achieving the Louder than Words™ charter mark will also support wider organisational aims, such as improving your service for people with other communication barriers.

Develop your business – most businesses are not making the most of the £81 million in potential spending power of disabled people. Improving access for customers with hearing loss gives you the opportunity to increase your income from a largely underserved group of customers.

Improve customer loyalty – our research shows that over 80% of our members say they return somewhere if they have found it to be deaf aware – and they will also recommend you to family and friends.



The team were surprised that the recommendations were not difficult to implement and that even the smallest changes, such as buying portable loops, made a huge difference to those who needed them. This made the whole experience really worthwhile.

Epsom and Ewell Council Customer Services

All those trained were enthusiastic to put their new skills into practice.

Identity and Passport Service, Northern Ireland

Good for your employees

Build team confidence – training your staff in communication skills and deaf awareness will improve their confidence when talking to people who are deaf or have a hearing loss. Increased confidence can lead to greater job satisfaction, improved productivity and quality. Going through an accreditation process also has proven benefits for team building, as staff work together to achieve a common goal.

It's the law – we can help you towards meeting your legal obligations to your employees under the Equality Act. Louder than Words™ accreditation demonstrates that you protect employees with hearing loss from discrimination and that you make reasonable adjustments where necessary, such as using communication support and assistive technology. We can also help you understand how work-based assessments can help your employees.

One in six of the population have some form of hearing loss, most of which is age-related. The rising number of employees aged 50+ makes it increasingly important you have the right policies and procedures in place.

Did you know?

Access to Work (ATW) is a government scheme run by Jobcentre Plus that covers the financial cost of providing disability solutions that would otherwise not be considered a 'reasonable adjustment'.





Good for safety

Health and safety – people with hearing loss need to feel confident your organisation has the technology they need to keep safe and informed, such as loop systems at reception desks and information points, and fire alarms to alert people who are deaf in an emergency.

Preventing damage – you also need to be aware of the danger of noise exposure to your employees' hearing. Exposure to sound above 85 decibels can damage hearing permanently over time. This can occur very slowly over a number of years, so it's difficult to notice the change.

Our Hearing Check can identify potential hearing loss and offer your employees advice and information on how to take action.

Did you know?

The Building Regulations 2004 (Approved Document, Part M) sets minimum legal standards for access for people with hearing loss.

Good for your business

Recent research, such as the Social Equity Index, shows that consumers judge companies and services according to how they treat their employees, suppliers and customers – showing that you take corporate social responsibility seriously can enhance your reputation.

Cost effective recommendations – our access consultants have a wealth of experience in assessing a diverse range of organisations from all sectors. Any changes we recommend will be a cost effective way to ensure best practice for people with hearing loss and show you take equality seriously.

Access to other specialised services – we offer an integrated solution to your access requirements and offer reductions on products and services, as well as continuing advice and support.



Go for it! This is an eye opening experience and provided by a company that want to help organisations be more inclusive of the deaf community. Action on Hearing Loss were flexible and supportive whilst helping us achieve the Louder than Words™ accreditation.

Enfield Borough Council Customer Services

High quality customer service is a top priority for Job Centre Plus, as the majority of our services involve face-to-face interaction. By working towards the Louder than Words™ charter mark, we have strengthened our daily communications within each of our offices for our deaf and hard of hearing staff and customers.

Job Centre Plus, Thames Valley





Our price promise

The Louder than Words™ accreditation process is tailored to meet your specific requirements, so charges vary. We are a social enterprise and all income is reinvested in our charitable work towards our vision of a world where people aren't limited or labelled by hearing loss – and where everyone values their hearing enough to look after it.

Our prices are transparent – our customers tell us that costs are clearly repaid in terms of efficiency, better customer service and improved satisfaction. We're confident any outlay will be recovered by access improvements made.

Email us today to find out more and get a written quote – we look forward to talking to you!

louderthanwords@hearingloss.org.uk

We're the charity taking action on hearing loss since 1911. We can't do this without your help.

To find out more about what we do and how you can support us go to www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

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**Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of
The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.**
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**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**