

**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2022-2023

Helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind

[hearingdogs.org.uk](https://hearingdogs.org.uk)

## A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal



**Over the past year, Hearing Dogs has continued to help thousands of deaf people and people with hearing loss. We have done this through our face-to-face and digital services. 156 dogs have been matched with deaf people and 1,144 established partnerships have been supported. We have also invested in, and developed, our community-based services across the UK, and our other in-person support services.**

The way the charity helps deaf people and people with hearing loss through its range of personalised services is always evolving. We remain committed to providing the right professional and expert support in a way that can be accessed by as many people as possible. It is this commitment that ensures we can continue to reach people with all levels of hearing loss, as well as their friends and families, who also often need support.

Our family of dedicated volunteers remains an integral part of the charity; those who care for the breeding dogs, our volunteer puppy trainers and those who help deliver

our Hearing Link Services. We could not help as many deaf people and people with hearing loss as we do without this network of kind people who so generously donate so much of their time to make a difference.

One example of the dedication of our volunteers was in the success of our

recent partnership with national retailer Pets at Home. Hearing Dogs was chosen as the beneficiary charity for Pets at Home's summer fundraising appeal, which resulted in donations of over £565,000. This donation, which funds the support of a third of all hearing dog partnerships for a year, and the publicity it gave to the charity, was extremely important. So many of our volunteers visited Pets at Home stores in their burgundy uniforms with dogs-in-training, to talk to store colleagues about Hearing Dogs and what the charity does to change deaf people's lives. This was a huge contributor to the success of the fundraiser. Thanks to all of you who took the time to visit a Pets at Home store to talk about the charity, or donated to the fundraiser.

It is thanks to our supporters, volunteers, and staff, that we are able to continue working towards our vision: a day when no deaf person feels alone. We remain committed to this vision and focussed on our goal of helping as many deaf people and people with hearing loss as possible.



## How the BFG ('Big Friendly Gordon') changed Elyana's life

**Elyana's deafness made her feel very anxious.**

At her lowest points, she would tear her own hair out, or would spend the day vomiting when everything got too much.

Elyana's hearing dog, Gordon, has transformed her life.

At night when she doesn't wear her [hearing] processors, not being able to hear was very frightening. Elyana also had issues sleeping, which is a common problem for deaf children to experience. Gordon gives her reassurance that she isn't alone in the dark and silence – if a smoke alarm went off, he would alert her.

He has taken away her anxiety.

Elyana's mum Silvie says: "Thanks to Gordon, Elyana has grown into this really

happy, vibrant, confident little girl, who doesn't seem to have the anxieties that she used to have."

- There are at least 50,000 children who are deaf in the UK
- 12 million people in the UK have hearing loss, that's about 1 in 5
- An estimated 1.2 million people in the UK have severe or profound deafness
- Hearing loss can lead to withdrawal from social situations, emotional distress, loneliness and depression
- Hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia by up to five times

*RNID*



## The past year

**The kindness of our donors and fundraisers and the dedication of our volunteers and staff, have enabled us to train and match 156 dogs with deaf people and provide ongoing support to a further 1,144 existing hearing dog partnerships over the past year.**

Through our personalised range of Hearing Link Services, such as our Helpdesk and support groups, we have provided help and support to thousands more people with hearing loss – both in-person and online.



We developed and invested in a number of community-based services, to allow more people across the UK to access our support when they need it. One of these services is our Hearing Loss Community days, which will be launched fully in the coming year. These free events will be offered nationwide and are open to the public. Run by volunteers and charity staff, they provide help and assistance to anyone with hearing loss, or their friends and families – from finding out what other services are available to help them manage their hearing, to simply having a chat with someone who has experience of hearing loss.



We have continued to invest in and expand our digital offering for people seeking help and advice on a range of hearing-related issues, such as the expert information and new informational videos on our Hearing Link Services website, which received hundreds of thousands of visits throughout the year.

We also continued to invest in online learning and development resources for our 3,000-strong family of volunteers, to expand their knowledge and to continue to provide all the support they need in their roles.

The Charity was chosen as the beneficiary charity for national retailer Pets at Home's Summer Fundraiser 2022, which ran throughout July. We worked with Pets at Home to deliver a successful fundraiser which raised £565,000 for the Charity. Hearing Dogs branding and messaging was displayed prominently in all 450-plus stores, and stores sold Hearing Dogs merchandise and carried out additional fundraising through cycle rides, car washes, selling handmade products, and more.

The relationship with Pets at Home was an incredibly valuable one for the charity – not only for the money raised but also because it raised awareness of Hearing Dogs to a very large new audience. Following the success of the Summer Fundraiser, Hearing Dogs was chosen to be the beneficiary charity for Pets at Home's Summer Fundraiser in 2023, with the aim of raising over £1 million over a two-year period.

## Our Year in Numbers



**5,000**

Our impact through all our services has helped over 5,000 people with hearing loss in the last 12 months

**319,017**

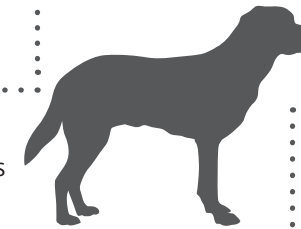
Total reach through our website



**3,046**

Volunteers

**345** Applicants, including children



**1,090**

adult hearing dog partnerships supported

**54** Child hearing dog partnerships supported

**156**

Dogs matched with a deaf person

**2,100**

Partnership support visits

**178**

Puppies trained



**85** LinkUp support groups

**282** 1-2-1 support sessions

**260** Hearing information days



**1,141**

Community support events



**1,116** Helpdesk enquiries

**10,330** Information downloads



## Looking ahead

**Over the coming year, and beyond, we remain committed to helping as many deaf people and people with hearing loss as possible.**

We will do this through the training and matching of our highly skilled dogs, our existing range of personalised Hearing Link Services, and the development of and investment in new services – both in-person and online – to help anyone who needs support with their hearing loss journey.



The breadth of our services mean we can help people with hearing loss across the UK, in a way that is right for them. From our Helpdesk and Link Up support groups, to community-based services such as our Hearing Loss Community Days, our services will continue to provide the right help and support to enable people to manage their hearing and find solutions that make life easier for them.

Additional services have been in development and will be launching in the coming year, including our Hearing Support Centre at our southern training centre, The Grange, and another new service called Helpful Hours.

The Hearing Support Centre will be a purpose-built facility that will act as a safe and relaxed environment for on-site assessments for hearing dog applicants and will provide them with a wealth of information on other ways we can support them through our Hearing Link Services.



Helpful Hours are free hour-long sessions, held online or in person, that offer information and guidance on specific topics relating to hearing loss, such as 'How to get the most out of an audiology appointment'. They are suitable for anyone with hearing loss, or their family or friends, who may find the topics useful.

An example of the contribution made by volunteers is the success of our relationship with national retailer Pets at Home. Hearing Dogs will be working with Pets at Home for a second year, as the beneficiary charity of their Summer Fundraiser. Building on the success of the Summer Fundraiser in 2022, Pets at Home hopes to raise over £1 million over two years to help us train more hearing dogs and change the lives of more deaf people.



The support of our volunteers has been essential to the success of the partnership with Pets at Home and will remain so. They have visited hundreds of stores with dogs in training, to thank store colleagues for their fundraising efforts, and to talk to store colleagues and customers about what the Charity does and how we transform the lives of deaf people.

Our 3,000-strong volunteer family will continue to be integral to our ability to help thousands of deaf people and people with hearing loss every year. Working alongside dedicated staff, they train our puppies, help run our personalised services, raise vital funds, and spread the word about Hearing Dogs.

It is only with the support of our volunteers and kind donors, that we can continue working towards our vision of a day when no deaf person feels alone – a vision that will guide everything the Charity does in the next year and beyond.



# Our stories



## Carolann and Walnut

"Marly, my first hearing dog, passed away suddenly during COVID. When lockdown ended, suddenly I was alone at home, with no shadow and no sound alerts. I was losing confidence quickly and my anxiety was high. I was missing my four-legged friend and trained hearing dog so much. One night I was so emotional, my husband said "you need another hearing dog", so I knew I had to find out if another hearing dog was possible.

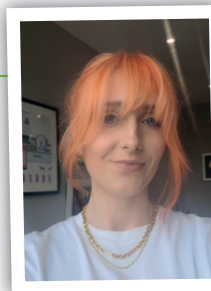
Fast forward 18 months, and I got a lovely email to say they had found a match! It was a bit of a shock because I didn't believe it would happen so soon. Walnut, a black Labrador, arrived and it was LOVE at first sight. She has filled our home with so much love. Walnut has filled a massive hole, and we never thought that would happen."

## Cecilia and Bertie

"We adore attending community days. It's a chance to meet my partnership instructor face-to-face in a relaxed environment, where they can offer advice and support which, in turn, helps to increase my confidence.

"For Bertie, it's a chance to meet a lovely group of dog friends and play. He leads zoomies and thoroughly enjoys the enthusiastic greetings of his friends. He loves our partnership instructor, Dave, and always has a special waggy-tailed joy in seeing him. For me, it's invaluable. Some of the best tips for working well with Bertie have come from other partnerships – watching them interact and chatting with the human half!

Warm, growing friendships develop further with each community day, and these friendships have the added value of being with people on similar journeys with hearing loss and isolation."



## Alice

"I've had several positive interactions with Hearing Link Services. I first

contacted their Helpdesk to see if I could find a local group that might support me with my sudden hearing loss. They linked me up with a volunteer who signposted me to local groups and told me about the range of services Hearing Link offers. I then attended an online LinkUp meeting and talked to other people with similar stories and experiences to me. I found that to be a great support. Further along in my personal journey I then took part in a hearing support session with a peer support volunteer. She was someone who had a very similar lived experience to me. She let me ask all the questions that I needed to and kindly shared her knowledge and understanding with me."

## Jane

"I had applied for a hearing dog and during the process I was able to access the range of services offered by Hearing Link Services. I attended their information day in Yorkshire and took part in the Charity's 40th anniversary celebrations where I met other beneficiaries, as well as volunteers and staff. I also got support from the

## Ralph and Winnie

I used to miss really important sounds, like the alarm clock, doorbell, or even the fire alarm. This was especially worrying when I was alone in my flat.

"At work, there were occasions where people didn't know about my deafness, and assumed I was ignoring them.

"I found socialising difficult. I have to make sure that people are facing me when talking to me. Once people are aware, they are usually very considerate, but it's getting that awareness across in the first place that I've needed help with.

Winnie has made my life so much easier – both at home and at work.

She's excellent at waking me up on time, alerts me to different sounds throughout the day, and her burgundy Hearing Dogs jacket lets people know I'm deaf, so they are more likely to be considerate.

"She's so attentive. I feel safe with her.

"If I were to sum her up it would be: full of love."

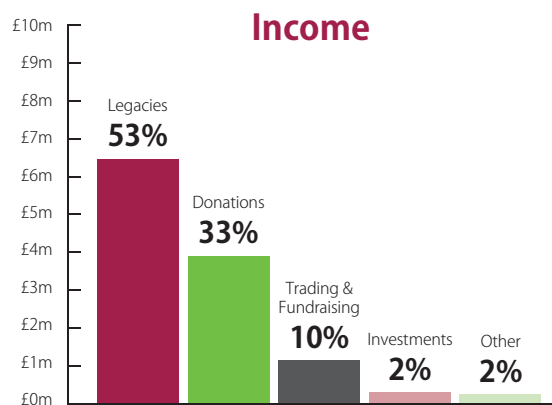
Helpdesk and during one-to-one online sessions. A week after finding out I had been matched with a Labrador called Bramble, I attended a LinkUp support group. It was an emotional couple of weeks, but the group was a fantastic support. I was able to talk openly about my hearing loss journey and meet others. I gained so much from it. Everybody was so friendly, and it was very informative."

# Financial summary 2022/23

During 2022/23 we received total income of **£12.1million** and we spent **£12.2million**.

Our income in 2022/23 dipped from the previous year predominantly due to lower legacy income of £6.5m versus £9.1m in 2021/22. Due to the more difficult economic environment, we also saw the value of the Charity's investments drop by £0.2m against an increase of £0.6m in 2021/22.

This resulted in a loss for the year of **£0.3million** against an excess of income of **£3.1million** in the previous year.

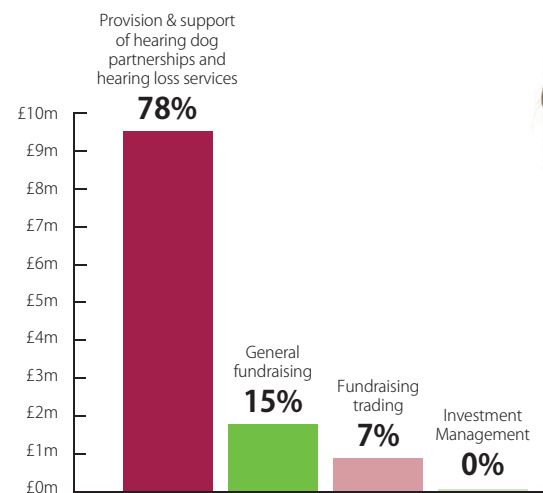


## Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	£6,466	52%
Donations	£3,985	33%
Trading & fundraising	£1,119	10%
Investments	£272	2%
Other	£248	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,090</b>	<b>100%</b>

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023. For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please email [info@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:info@hearingdogs.org.uk) or telephone **01844 348100**.

## Expenditure



## How our funds were used:

Income:	£000	%
Provision & support of hearing dog partnerships and hearing loss services	£9,504	78%
General fundraising	£1,799	15%
Fundraising trading	£834	7%
Investment Management	£55	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,192</b>	<b>100%</b>





# How you can help

It is a joy to be able to help people with hearing loss and change deaf people's lives and this is something that you can be part of too.

From donating, sponsoring a puppy, leaving a gift in your Will, volunteering or encouraging your place of work, or local community, to support Hearing Dogs, your help will change the lives of deaf children and adults. Thank you.



**Hearing Dogs**  
for Deaf People



**Hearing Link**  
Services

**The Grange**  
Wycombe Road, Saunderton,  
Princes Risborough, HP27 9NS

**T** 01844 348100 (Text relay 18001 01844 348100)

**E** [info@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:info@hearingdogs.org.uk) **W** [hearingdogs.org.uk](http://hearingdogs.org.uk)

**Royal Patron** – Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal • **President** – Sir Stuart Hampson CVO DL

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**Chair of Trustees** – Christina O'Donovan-Rossa

**Vice Chair of Trustees** – Adrian M Horsley, Dip Arch, RIBA, JP, DL

**Chief Executive** – Tracy Griffin

You can find out more about our trustees by visiting our website at [hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees](http://hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees)

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