

## Feedback from Workshop B: Hearing Impaired

1. Provision for those with hearing impairment “Is not good” in church.
2. In one church 50% congregation have hearing aids and need better provision.
3. People experience negative attitudes towards deaf people.
4. More understanding needed of issues faced by people with hearing loss.
5. ALL who give Bible readings; pray from the front; preach/teach in churches should learn to use microphones properly.
6. Speech should not be too fast, and should be clearly enunciated, and voices not dropped at the end of sentences.
7. Churches should have some input/training from professional people who understand the problems of hearing loss on their members. (Deaf awareness courses?)
8. In meetings, people should ALWAYS use a microphone to make a comment or ask a question.
9. There should be no music behind speech.
10. People were encouraged to be “Bloody minded” and complain, and keep on raising awareness to bring about change.
11. When using a telephone, the advice was to ask people to slow down and speak clearly.

## RESULTS FROM THE GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

### Q1: How has your hearing loss affected you?

Slight loss of confidence; confusion.

Withdrawal – church roles and groups: frustration: Isolation in part: Empathy:  
Relationship problems: Too involved with people's problems.

Miss a few words in sermon. May not hear a person pray in a meeting.; but I cope 95% of the time, and feel I belong.

Difficult to hear people who speak quickly and quietly, - when aids magnify metallic sounds more than voices.

I feel isolated at times.

Deafness has profoundly affected my life-mostly, it seems to me, adversely. It's been difficult to cope with- and there have been times I have simply not coped. There are coping strategies, but I want to do more than cope! Sign language and lip reading do help- especially with confidence, but such skills are not easy to learn. It does require COURAGE!

Withdrawing from noisy gatherings, losing confidence to enter many social gatherings.

Made me fearful and isolated at first. Over the years – learned to use tools to good effect..... Causes isolation at times in noisy environments and large groups – note have had loss for 23 years since age 43.

Asking people to repeat what they have said.

Makes communication with others difficult.

Hearing person here with a hard of hearing person with considerable loss. Need to learn issues involved.

It is inconvenient: Miss some conversations: Need to position myself carefully.

Difficult to hear in conversation, and in a crowd. I sometimes miss notices about events taking place in church. It depends who is talking or who is saying the prayers.

Can't endure noise level, or separate background noise along with speech – both are the same volume. I get exasperated with folk not facing me, whilst talking to me. Do I have to tell folk that I can't hear them? I feel very isolated at times.

I find it very difficult to hear people in prayer meetings and in our pastoral care meetings. Also 1 or 2 or 3 of our male preachers speak too fast, and not clearly enough.

Unable to join in.

I don't have a hearing loss, but am interested in helping those that have.

Lonely, and socially isolated.

## **Q2: How well does your church support people with hearing loss?**

I am not aware apart from hearing loop of "Support".

Not aware of any.

Microphone means I can hear alright most of the time. Ask for medical/technical assistance.

It tries to do so.

In services well, otherwise variable.

The local church no longer effectively provides support for those with hearing loss.

My church is very supportive. They offer a BSL service once a month, with a social gathering after.

Not that well. We have a social system which doesn't work well. Being replaced. BUT much of it is a user problem. As at least 50% of our worshippers use hearing aids. I find this astonishing. I am sick of the ignorant behaviour.

Slowly realising the need to provide for those with hearing loss.

It is more aware only because those affected speak out, or at least some do.

Provides a loop system, but little else. Have been asked to sit further down the front.

Has a loop system.

I must admit I don't know. As far as I know – the loop system.

Our pastor is loud and clear. We have a loop system, but many people in prayer meetings just have the attitude "you just have to try harder." I have the attitude ""You just need to speak loud (not too loud) and very clearly, and slowly (but not too slowly.)" Head up, deep breath, speak out, look up, move your lips.

Loop system

Loop system

Provides a loop system; provides signers; have overhead projection to show worship songs

### **Q3: Does your church have a loop system that works well?**

Yes (x 9 people in the workshop)

Unreliable or Does not work well (x 8 people)

No x 1

### **Q4: Please tell us what churches could do better?**

Gather a group together who are like minded (hard of hearing) people in our individual churches.

Understanding the issue – Leaders: Group leaders: Congregation.

Understand that people with hearing loss are not stupid.

Cater for them as a whole group sometimes.

Give them kudos not sympathy.

Look up when you speak, and speak more slowly. Don't drop your voice at the end of sentences; or make asides sotto voce. Background noise makes it difficult to hear or make myself heard.

Make us aware (when not obvious) where the speaker is standing.

Install a loop system for the hall as well as the church.

Repeat answers given by members of the congregation when interviewed.

Make sure that the sound system is top quality and use microphones well.

Constant reminders in small group meetings to speak clearly without hands in front of mouth.

To face people.

Not to stand in the middle of a circle and keep turning round.

Pray with heads up, not looking at the floor.

NO MUSIC, strumming guitars, etc. while someone is speaking or praying.

The local church could do better in seeking ways to provide more support for deaf/ deafened people eg. a Deaf service once a month. The Diocese could do more to encourage and support this – but this can only happen if people want to make it happen, and that includes myself.

Offer more BSL services and get togethers in local areas instead of having to travel quite a distance in the winter.

Speak clearly in services etc., Microphones amplify mumbles with mumbles. Do not say this microphone is not working so I will shout! And do NOT SHOUT. No excuse for not having working microphone somewhere.

Ensure before each service/meeting that the loop system is working well.

When the spoken word like the words of hymns and the liturgy is on the screen, but is not working.

More visual sometimes. Clergy at front – out of sight – the sound fades. Ensure training for those using microphones – they need to adjust the microphone height and speak clearly and not too fast. NO music with speech – prayer/preaching.

For me, so long as there is a good sound system, I am OK for now.

Remind people at the front to speak slowly and to use the microphone more. I can always hear our minister and assistant when they are preaching a sermon.

Teach the 'hearing' how to address those they are speaking to.

Our preachers and speakers should remember to speak UP. Everyone in prayer meetings should look up and speak up.

Readers – Speak slower and clearer.

BSL: Interpret sermon notes. Readers etc., speak slower/clearer. Good sound system.

Provide advance notice of sermon: Subtitles on videos. Provide Deaf awareness training.

Need more signers.

### **Q5: Are you aware of resources in the community to assist you?**

No (x 5 people in the workshop)

Yes (x 10 people in the workshop)

Thankfully, I don't need them at present.

I think so.

I am now more aware because of this day. Thank you.

Yes, but it is the leaders who need to know this information!