



ANNUAL REVIEW 2017-2018



www.hearingdogs.org.uk

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A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal

As Royal Patron of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, I look back warmly at another wonderful year of endeavour by our staff, volunteers and supporters.

Our celebrations for 35 years of Hearing Dogs reached a pinnacle in July, with a glorious event held at The Grange. There was a palpable sense of pride – so much has been achieved, and so many deaf people have been helped to lead the full, rich lives that they deserve.

I was overjoyed that the merger between Hearing Dogs and Hearing Link was successfully completed in August 2017. I have had the great pleasure of being patron of both organisations for many years. I look forward to the merged charity going on to accomplish even greater successes.

I would like to thank everyone at Hearing Dogs for their efforts in building this strong foundation, and we look ahead to a positive, bright future.



A message from our Chairman, Faith Clark

During this, our 35th year, I was constantly reminded of the values that have driven the Charity since it was co-founded by my mother, Lady (Beatrice) Wright. We have always strived to treat everyone with respect and compassion, to be friendly and personal. We have made a promise to be dependable and trustworthy and to be committed and kind.

It is wonderful to see these values embodied in everything our volunteers, staff and supporters do. Through the hearing dogs they raise and train, I see deaf people being given new hope for a more secure future and the joy that they can share and enjoy so much more with family and friends. It is an incredible, admirable, collective effort by people to whom the Charity owes a debt of gratitude.

These wonderful endeavours have been considerably enhanced by the friendly merger with Hearing Link. This natural 'fit' and beneficial symbiosis between us will allow us to help even greater numbers of deaf and hard of hearing people in many new and innovative ways.

As we look ahead, we also aim to train even more amazing hearing dogs each year to match the ever-growing demand. So, thank you to everyone who has helped us get this far. We have made so many wonderful memories together. Please join us to help us make some more!



The impact of hearing loss

- **You feel isolated** when you have difficulty interacting and in conversations you feel disconnected from friends and family.
- **You feel frustrated** because you want to express yourself, be independent and do all the things that others may take for granted.
- **It's invisible** so, without any obvious signs of your disability, people assume you can hear them. This can cause embarrassment, annoyance, and even put you in danger.

Geraldine and Bella

When Geraldine lost her hearing after numerous infections during her 30s, she had to leave the career she loved in the police service.

As a result, she slowly lost her confidence. "My social life was affected greatly," says Geraldine. "I was afraid of getting into situations where I would mishear people and act or respond incorrectly."

These situations could crop up anywhere, anytime. She was criticised at the railway station for talking during an announcement. In supermarkets

people would barge past her because she didn't hear them ask to get past.

So Geraldine chose to avoid these situations. Instead, she stayed at home, lonely, isolated and slowly losing the confidence she used to have as a member of the police.

Then her hearing therapist recommended she apply to Hearing Dogs and she was matched with Bella, a beautiful black Cocker Spaniel...



"There is unspoken trust, love and understanding between us."





"Bella has dramatically changed my life."

Today, Bella tells Geraldine about important sounds. For example, if the doorbell goes, Bella goes to Geraldine and nudges her with her nose. Geraldine asks 'What is it?' and follows Bella to the door. It's an everyday way to make life better.

But just as importantly, Bella has improved Geraldine's social life immeasurably.

"Bella has dramatically changed my life," says Geraldine. "I don't have to tell people that I am deaf as they can see Bella's burgundy coat. Only the other day I was at the supermarket and the

staff knew I was deaf because of Bella. They were so helpful when I asked them where to find something. I even have confidence to use public transport again because people continually help me along the way. It's overwhelming how kind people are now."

Bella has helped Geraldine leave loneliness behind and become part of the world around her again. Today they are a team – or like a mother and child according to Geraldine. "We both seem to know what each other wants. There is unspoken trust, love and understanding between us."

There are
11 million
people with hearing
loss across the UK, that's
around one in six of us.

An estimated
900,000
people
in the UK have severe or
profound hearing loss.

There are
50,000
children
with hearing loss in the UK.

By 2035, it is estimated
there'll be around
15.6 million
people with hearing loss across
the UK. That's one in five of us.

Hearing loss can lead to
**withdrawal
from social
situations,**
emotional distress and depression.

Statistics from Action on Hearing Loss

Highlights 2017-18

In March 2018 we were thrilled to host our Royal Patron HRH The Princess Royal, who opened The Grange Restaurant & Gift Shop. Opened to the public in spring 2018, this is a brand-new endeavour for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Located at our Southern Training Centre in the heart of the beautiful Chiltern Hills, it has been designed with accessibility and acoustics in mind, as well as being dog-friendly. Every penny of profit from our delicious menus will support our Charity's mission to help deaf people reconnect with life.



In August 2017, after enjoying a close partnership for a number of years, we merged with Hearing Link. This enables even more people with hearing loss to access our life-changing services.

We were delighted to have hearing dog child partnership Sarah and Waffle (pictured below) nominated as finalists for the Crufts 'Friends for Life' Award 2018. Sarah, profoundly deaf from a young age, has grown from a shy little girl into a confident young woman – all thanks to Waffle.

Our puppy sponsorship scheme, which offers a fascinating insight into a hearing dog's training journey, has gone from strength to strength and this year raised over half a million pounds.





The Prime Minister's Points of Light award recognises outstanding volunteers, so we were extremely proud when our very own Fiona Daniels (pictured above) received this award with a personal letter from The Rt Hon Theresa May MP.



We launched a series of residential courses at The Grange, called Link-ups delivered by Hearing Link. The first two, in October and November, helped future hearing dog applicants learn techniques for feeling more independent and confident in their daily lives.



In January 2018, Lisa Baldock, partner of hearing dog Inca, was made an MBE. Lisa has worked to improve workplace practices for deaf or disabled people, including the Disability Passport which helps managers understand their employees' needs.



We launched Hearing Dogs TV in September 2017 to give people a behind-the-scenes look at our work, and it has reached thousands of new people online. Visit hearingdogs.org.uk/hdtv to see our puppies' first training steps, fun tips to teach your dog, and the day our celebrity supporter and Countdown star Rachel Riley visited The Grange.

We continue to run our partnership community days, in which local partnerships share experiences, learn together – and make new friends. We held 84 community days throughout the year with such fantastic feedback that we'll be holding more this coming year.

Big steps for little puppies

How exactly do soft, fluffy, playful puppies grow up to become life-changing hearing dogs?

It begins with the volunteer who looks after the puppy's mum. Within a few weeks of the puppy's birth, the volunteer starts using a whistle to tell the puppy it's food time, which lays the foundations for recall. The volunteer also introduces our puppy to the world very gently, for example showing cars going past the house. At about eight weeks, the puppy goes to live with another volunteer, who spends the next year helping the puppy find out more about the world, a process we call 'socialising'. Together they will also go through basic training, using our Puppy Star awards as milestones for judging where they're up to.



To pass the **Puppy One Star**, the puppy needs to be happy around new people and puppies, to respond to its name and to understand basic obedience such as 'wait'. At around 16 weeks of age, the puppy moves on to the **Two Star**. This is about learning to walk nicely on the lead (called heelwork) and slowly introducing the puppy to town environments. The **Three Star** course begins at

8 months and focuses on aspects such as introducing the burgundy coat and settling calmly in public places such as cafés and restaurants – essential for accompanying their future deaf partner wherever they want to go. At around one year, our puppy starts the **Four Star**. This is where it learns how to alert to important sounds such as the doorbell, and life-saving sounds like the fire alarm. It's also when we match them with their deaf partner. Finally, the **Five Star**, is when the puppy graduates. We test everything the puppy has learned and

make sure it is ready to be placed with their deaf partner.

The reward? A Hearing Dogs burgundy coat and a very proud dog that is ready to transform a deaf person's life.



Our year in numbers

200 Thanks to you, we are well on our way to achieving our goal of training **200 dogs a year by 2020**

939 Total number of recipients and hearing dogs we supported



New hearing dogs placed or accredited before 31 March 2018

42

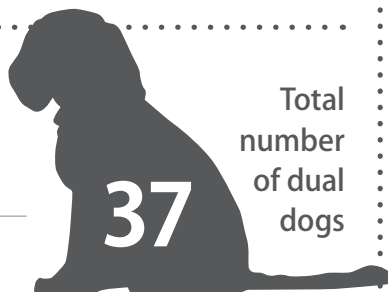
Total number of ADI accredited hearing dogs for children

1

Our first family friend placed

6

Total number of confidence and companion dogs placed



Total number of dual dogs

21

Total number of sound support dogs

508 Total number of applicants

15 Number of child applicants

15 Applicants for dual accredited dogs

82 Applicants for successor dogs



After extensive training we graduate our dogs who meet the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) standards. Many of our other dogs also help deaf people. These include sound support and confidence and companion dogs.

2,838

Support visits this year

2,476

Hearing dog partnerships created since 1982



460 puppies in training

Joe and Travis

I used to sleep really badly because I'm deaf. If I woke up during the night, I felt so lost in the dark and the silence. My mind would play tricks on me, make me see things that weren't there. I'd get up and look out of the window, and I'd start seeing monsters crawling under cars, hiding in hedges and slithering under the streetlights.

For pretty much my entire life, I was tired. I just felt isolated, disconnected, not part of what was going on around me.

This wasn't just because I couldn't sleep, I really did feel disconnected. I couldn't be part of anything – conversations, jokes, everyday family life. I felt so alone. At the end of another exhausting day, when I came home from school, I would just bury myself in my Xbox and try not to think about the dreaded bedtime again.

I really wished I could have someone who could protect me during those lonely, late nights.

With Travis around, I feel safe.

Now, at night, instead of looking through the window at made-up monsters, I just look down from my bed and see my brilliant Travis. He looks back at me with his big dog eyes and I know everything's fine.

It's a massive difference. I can sleep, because Travis is there. Then, in the mornings, I've got so much energy now. So has Travis! He yanks the duvet off me to wake me up and puts his paws on the bed. I laugh and shout "Get off, Travis!" I don't really mean it though. It's great.

I like helping mum out around the house now. She tells Travis to "Fetch Joe", and then Travis trots to me, gives me a nose nudge and then leads me back to mum.

I also like it when we all go for walks together. I'm just happy to be really awake and part of what's going on around me.

The only problem is that when I try to play on my Xbox now, my mum sets the timer for 20 minutes, then Travis tells me my time's up!

At night, Travis keeps the monsters at bay. During the day, he tells me about things around me that I can't hear, so I'm part of the world.

If I'm sad, he chases away my sadness, and replaces it with happiness. That's why Travis is my superhero.



**“With superhero
hearing dog
Travis around,
I’m always loved,
never lonely.”**



Our volunteering family

Volunteers are absolutely essential to what we do. Our volunteer network stretches far and wide. These wonderful individuals assist with puppy socialising and training, looking after hearing dog mums and dads, fundraising, supporting office-based staff, as well as maintaining our beautiful sites in Buckinghamshire and Yorkshire.

Volunteering is fun too! There are countless firm friendships that have been forged through walking dogs, organising events, or weeding flower beds.

We have big goals for 2020, to which volunteers are integral so we have already started expanding the team. During Volunteers' Week in June 2017 we were able to announce that the volunteer family had reached 2,000 members and numbers have continued to climb since. As of 31 March 2018, we have **2,620 volunteers**.

We achieved this with a big push behind our 'Dog lovers wanted!' campaign, to recruit more fosterers to care for hearing dog mums and dads, as well as more volunteers to care for and train puppies and dogs full time.

We also expanded our puppy socialising scheme to new catchments in East Berkshire and North Hampshire. Our Training from Home scheme also grew, thereby giving greater responsibility to experienced volunteers to carry out soundwork training.





**“We’re so grateful
for all our
volunteers”**



Volunteers also helped us immensely with our community fundraising. They cycled in our Sportive, ran for us in the London Marathon and Great North Run, abseiled from the Forth Bridge and came on our Great British Dog Walks. They held car shows, volunteer fairs, quiz nights and undertook so many more activities – all selflessly to help raise even more funds to help even more deaf people.

While our volunteers support us, we also do our utmost to support them back. For example, we put together a shiny new speaker presentation this year. It went out to our 250-strong network of volunteer speakers across the UK to induct them and update their materials and kit.

We’re so grateful for all our volunteers, but this year two particularly bright stars won very high-profile awards. Fiona Daniels won the Prime Minister’s Points of Light Award, and we were delighted when Lisa Baldock received an MBE in the New Year Honours list.

Helping more people with hearing loss

In July, Hearing Link merged with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, a move that significantly increased the ways in which we can help people with hearing loss, and which enabled us to help over **2,000** deaf people this year. Through the friendly merger, Hearing Link retains its identity as a distinct service within the Charity, continuing its work providing life-changing services to people with hearing loss.



Hearing Link complements Hearing Dogs for Deaf People by providing **information, support and practical help** for people with hearing loss. We do this through events, our helpdesk, online shop, and initiatives to raise deaf awareness in the community.



180 people participated in our hearing rehabilitation groups, lasting from one day to a week. Everyone reported feeling more confident and knowledgeable about living with hearing loss, and less lonely after meeting others with the same challenges.



1,850 people contacted our helpdesk with questions about managing their hearing loss. While our trained, experienced helpdesk volunteers offer practical advice, they also offer genuine empathy and understanding as most of them live with hearing loss themselves. **52 people** received intensive support from our specialist community volunteers. Many of these people needed face-to-face visits and several sessions to help them find a way forward.



765 people obtained equipment and products that helped them manage their hearing better. Our online shop goes beyond just fulfilling orders, by communicating with customers to make sure the equipment they're ordering meets their needs, and then helping them get the best from it. This support is delivered by experienced, knowledgeable volunteers who have often used the equipment themselves.



As part of our outreach, the 'Let's Hear' project spanned the UK to increase the number of functioning hearing loops and infrared systems in the community, and make more public places accessible to hearing aid users. **Dozens** of 'Let's Hear' groups have been set up, and **hundreds** of volunteers have checked **thousands** of loops and infrared systems in shopping centres, theatres, cinemas, council offices, banks, and many other public facilities.



Finally, we echo the admiration for volunteers expressed elsewhere in this report. Hearing Link's services are delivered by trained, experienced volunteers in the community who often know from personal experience about the challenges of hearing loss and the solutions that work. They are the backbone of all Hearing Link's services: without their dedication, perseverance, and expertise we could not do what we do.

A big thank you to all our volunteers.



Steve Beal case study

Serious boyhood ear infections and mastoid surgeries left Steve Beal deafened and experiencing ill health into adulthood. During yet another hospital visit, his Speech Therapist recommended Hearing Link.

Steve and his wife Chris attended our Intensive Rehabilitation Programme. They learned new ways to live with deafness, and that they were not alone. Indeed, they were so impressed that they became volunteers.

During another ENT visit, Chris saw a leaflet about Hearing Dogs. They realised that, by accompanying Steve everywhere, a hearing dog might help him enjoy life more. In 2008, he was partnered with Yogi, a sleek Lurcher.

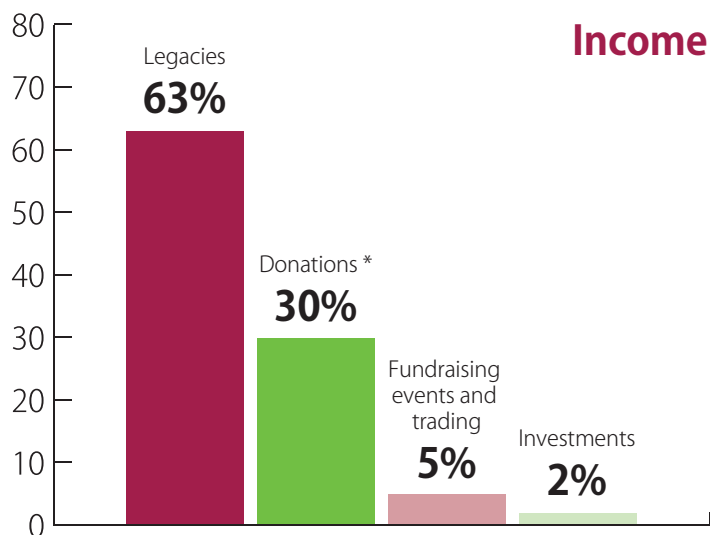
"Yogi rescued me," says Steve. "I could attend our church meetings again. He changed life for Chris too. She could go out, safe in the knowledge that Yogi was there for me."

Yogi has retired and Steve now has Jemma, a lovely black Labrador. He concludes: "I will never be able to thank Hearing Link and Hearing Dogs enough for what they have done for me and my family."

Financial summary 2017/18

During 2017/18 we received total income of **£8.748 million** and we spent **£8.613 million**.

This resulted in a surplus of **£0.135 million** which, after adding net gains on investments of **£0.045 million**, resulted in a net movement in funds of **£0.180 million**.

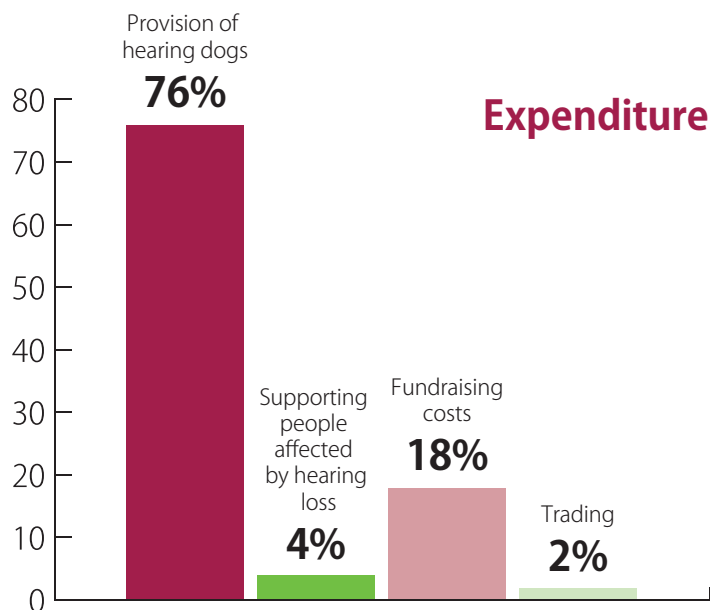


Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	5,548	63
Donations *	2,593	30
Fundraising events and trading	406	5
Investments	148	2
Other income	53	-
Total income	8,748	100

* Donations including branch income, sponsorship and gift aid.

Special thanks to The Bosher Hinton Foundation, The Ostacchini Family Trust and The Wolfson Foundation for their support.



How our funds were used:

Expenditure:	£000	%
Provision of hearing dogs	6,577	76
Supporting people affected by hearing loss	357	4
Raising funds:		
Fundraising costs	1,506	18
Trading	122	2
Investment management and governance costs	51	-
Total expenditure	8,613	100

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018.

For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please visit www.hearingdogs.org.uk/reports or email info@hearingdogs.org.uk

How you can help

The great news is – everyone can help! We receive no government funding so we rely on the kindness of individuals, trusts, companies, groups and volunteers to help us achieve our goals.

Charitable trusts and major gifts

Large donations can completely transform the lives of not just one deaf person, but many. They enable us to do so much, from taking puppies right the way through their training journey, to giving them lifetime support.

Corporate supporters

We have a strong history of being supported by companies, as well as helping them find ways to engage with their customers. Corporate support with Hearing Dogs is a fun way for everyone to contribute.

Community groups

Community groups are an essential part of what we do, helping to raise funds and awareness. We never cease to be amazed at what groups can achieve in highlighting the challenges deaf people face, as well as the ways in which hearing dogs can help.

Volunteers

We simply could not function without our volunteers. They are our lifeblood. They help train our dogs through puppy socialising, look after our breeding scheme dogs, give their time at events such as the Great British Dog Walks, and help with many other varied roles across the Charity.

If you've seen anything here that makes you think "This is me! I could do this!" then please get in touch, whether you want to be a volunteer, or a supporter. You can find out more through our website and even sign up to receive news updates about our work:

hearingdogs.org.uk



Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

Volunteer

- n Become a puppy socialiser
- n Join a local fundraising group
- n Look after a dog in your home
- n Help at one of training centres
- n Raise funds and awareness in your area
- n Become a helpdesk responder

hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer

Fundraise

- n Sponsor a hearing dog puppy
- n Leave a lasting legacy in your Will
- n Take part in a sponsored event
- n Donate online or by post
- n Attend an event

hearingdogs.org.uk/support

Spread the word

- n Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- n Share our work with your friends and family
- n Subscribe to our free e-newsletter

hearingdogs.org.uk/subscribe

Our team

Royal Patron
HRH The Princess Royal
President
Sir Stuart Hampson CVO
Life Vice-Presidents
Anthony Blunt MBE
Ronnie Bourne
Mrs D A McInnes

Trustees

Chairman: Mrs F B Clark
Vice Chairman: Dr Bruce Fogle MBE DVM MRCVS
Honorary Treasurer: Air Vice Marshal
D Crwys-Williams CB FCIPD FCIM

J Bower MBE BVSC MRCVS

G P Burchett MBA FCMI CMgr

B S Downes LL.B, FSHAA

A P Freeland MB BS FRCS

Dr H Harris MB ChB FRCGP

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Mrs M Jennings BA LL.B MBA

Director of Resources and Company Secretary

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Head of Partnership Services

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Head of Quality

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