



IMPACT REPORT

2019-2020

Helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind
hearingdogs.org.uk

A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People continues to help more people than ever, through the wide variety of personalised services we offer. These range from our clever and affectionate hearing dogs, through to our volunteer-run support groups and our Helpdesk for those dealing with their hearing loss.

In November 2019 I was delighted to open the new National Breeding Centre at The Grange in Saunderton. This facility will enable the Charity to breed more Hearing Dogs for the future. It is already a tremendous asset. It provides a state-of-the-art facility in which our breeding team can work, and a safe, relaxing environment for the exceptional dogs that are selected for breeding. There was also a great opportunity to raise

awareness of Hearing Dogs amongst the wider public, as the visit was filmed.

When I reflect on that day, and the crucial work of not just the staff but also the volunteers, I realise that, even in turbulent times, their selfless hard work and dedication remains constant.

Our volunteers devote so much of their time and energy to care for and train our dogs, raise funds, and keep the Charity thriving. They are truly inspirational. COVID-19 has provided an even greater challenge to those who depend on lip reading to 'hear' when the wearing of masks became more widespread. Having a Hearing Dog became even more valuable.

Looking to the future, the only certainty is that more changes will come. This is why we are being as agile and flexible as possible to address whatever lies ahead.

We are large enough to have real impact, but small enough to make good, quick decisions to help more people. We are a kind, compassionate and well-run Charity, and we made some courageous changes during this year. When we look back on these times, we will understand that these qualities helped us through, and will help us to support deaf people for as long as they need us.



The impact of hearing loss - Mary and Harley

After I lost my hearing, I tried to socialise but I couldn't follow conversations, so I would give up. I felt terribly isolated, cocooned in silence, and lived with constant anxiety. When I reached the bottom of a very deep hole, I'm ashamed to say that I tried to end it all.

Without my hearing dog Harley, I wouldn't be here today. Harley has helped me climb out of my depression. He takes away the loneliness and fear. I feel safe knowing that he'll tell me if the fire alarm goes. He has also really helped me escape my silent bubble by meeting people when out walking.

He's a very special dog – my soulmate.

- There are 50,000 children with hearing loss in the UK, around half are born with hearing loss.
- An estimated 900,000 people in the UK have severe or profound deafness.
- 1 in 6 people in the UK have hearing loss, that's 11 million people.
- 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.

Action on Hearing Loss

Helping more people



We helped nearly 5,000 deaf people throughout 2019-2020. As the year ended and lockdown came into effect, we could see that our core aim would become more relevant than ever: to help deaf people leave loneliness behind.

This sense of loneliness is why hearing dogs are so vital. Their unconditional

love helps deaf people to feel that they have a constant friend looking after them. Meanwhile, their practical support in alerting them to life-saving sounds like smoke alarms, and important sounds such as alarm clocks, makes every day so much better in so many ways.

The same goes for our Hearing Link services. We want deaf people to know

that we are here for them, and can help them, practically and emotionally, to find new ways of living a full life.

With such a wide-ranging offering, our websites have helped signpost visitors to the correct services for their needs, from applications for hearing dogs, to support from our Helpdesk or news about hearing loss.

For example, the online shop at shop.hearinglink.org is a helpful resource for people with all levels of hearing loss. Visual aids for identifying this 'invisible disability', such as badges featuring the message 'I have hearing loss – please speak clearly', have proven especially popular in helping deaf people to communicate.

Our Helpdesk is for anyone with questions relating to hearing loss. Many of our Helpdesk Responder Team have personal experience of hearing loss and are ready to offer guidance and support. Two of our enquirers commented: "Please pass on my thanks to the volunteer who took the time and trouble to help me" and "Your advice has been so helpful! Thank you so much for being there for me".

Our Hearing Aid Liaison Outreach (HALO) drop-in sessions reached over 400 patients through NHS Lothian. We received consistently positive feedback including: "I was given lots of very useful information by the volunteers, as well as encouragement. Most impressed!"

We also continued to offer other vital services such as the Hearing Hub service at The Grange in Saunderton, Buckinghamshire, support groups for people with hearing loss and their friends and families, and our network of community support volunteers who so kindly give their own time to help deaf people.



Rayane and Diesel

Rayane became profoundly deaf aged 18 months after a severe asthma attack. As a result, he found it difficult to have the confidence to live his own life, and to make friends. He also had terrible problems sleeping, because the silence and darkness scared him. So, he was exhausted all the time and couldn't concentrate. He seemed lost in his own little world.

But as soon as Rayane saw a hearing dog at a deafness event, he knew that was what he needed. So, from then on, every Christmas he would write a letter to Santa asking for one! He was right.

Today, Diesel accompanies Rayane in his journey through life. He is a new member of the family – and he is Rayane's best friend.

All aspects of Rayane's life have improved because he's not so exhausted. He can get out and be part of the world around him again. In the last year of primary school he developed some close friendships. The thing that got them all talking was Diesel. Diesel was there like a bridge, and then they got to know Rayane, and they became friends. He now feels confident to communicate or tell his friends when he can't hear them, which he never would have been able to do before.

For their first Christmas together, Rayane bought presents for Diesel, then they went outside and had tons of fun. This year, they also have a stocking especially for Diesel. **And Rayane's wish this year? For another child to have their very own hearing dog.**

Our year in numbers

4,835

Our impact through all our services has helped over 4,835 deaf people over the last 12 months



44

Child hearing dog partnerships supported

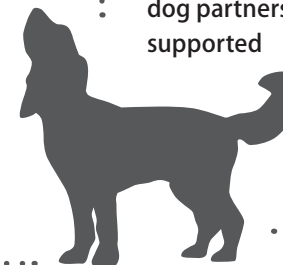
193

Dogs matched with a deaf person



982

Hearing dog partnerships supported



221

Puppies trained

3,362

Volunteers

1,803

Support visits

474

Applicants, including children



513

Members

2,722

Helpdesk enquiries



173

People attended LinkUps, Hearing Hub and other support services

400

People reached by Hearing Aid Liaison Outreach (HALO) drop-in sessions

4,455

Products sold through our online shop

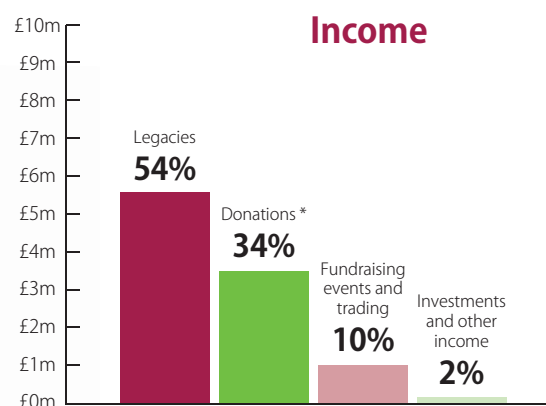


Financial summary 2019/20

During 2019/20 we received total income of **£10.4 million** and we spent **£9.9 million**.

After deducting net losses on investments* of **£525,000** this resulted in a net movement in funds of **£13,000**.

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020. For a copy of the Trustees' Reports and Financial Statements please email info@hearingdogs.org.uk or telephone **01844 348100**.

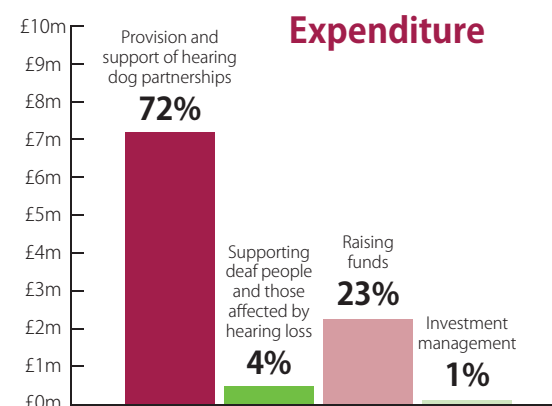


Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	5,675	54
Donations **	3,524	34
Fundraising events and trading	1,030	10
Investments	89	1
Other income	74	1
Total income	10,392	100

* Investment losses occurred in the last weeks of our financial year in March 2020, as the Coronavirus crisis affected global stock markets.

** Donations including branch income, sponsorship and gift aid.



How our funds were used:

Expenditure:	£000	%
Provision and support of hearing dog partnerships	7,124	72
Supporting deaf people and those affected by hearing loss	425	4
General fundraising	1,616	16
Fundraising trading	640	7
Investment management	49	1
Total expenditure	9,854	100



The future

As we rise to the inevitable challenges from Coronavirus, our watchword going forward is 'agility', for staff and volunteers alike. We are well-positioned to address these challenges: past investments in our IT infrastructure means we can readily support remote working and training. Importantly, this communication also helps maintain team spirits.

We were already developing our online hub for our dog care volunteers, called the 'Pawtal', but accelerated this when a national lockdown was announced. As a result, it took mere weeks to do what would normally take months, and has proven very popular, full of ideas, advice and support.

As the severity of the Coronavirus seems to be accelerating, we are preparing to support all our partnerships remotely, for example giving guidance on caring for hearing dogs during lockdown. We will provide personalised support through our regional Partnership Instructors,

via video calls, emails, texts or phone calls – even if they just need someone to talk to.

With the financial year ending and lockdown beginning, our community events have been put on hold. We have already increased our online fundraising activity and will continue to do so. We have firm plans to keep our supporters up to date with our actions over the coming months.

We are a resilient charity built on strong foundations with agile staff, and are confident we can continue transforming deaf people's lives long into the future.



How you can help

Charitable trusts, foundations and major gifts

play a hugely significant role in helping more deaf children and adults. We can show real, tangible results from your support, with inspiring stories about how deaf people have rediscovered the confidence to lead full and rewarding lives.

 **Corporate support** offers fantastic opportunities to partner with us and includes sponsoring our high-profile events, making us your Charity of the Year, or naming a life-changing hearing dog.

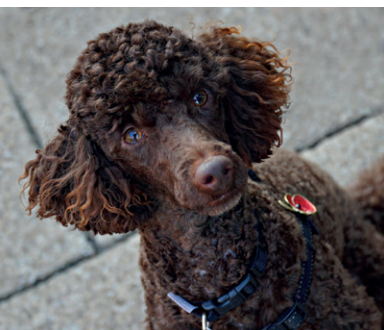
 **Volunteers** are our life-blood: without them we simply could not exist. Our volunteer family helps us in so many ways, from being 'puppy parents' to training our amazing hearing dogs, from helping out in The Grange Restaurant & Gift Shop to maintaining our training centres. Volunteers also run our peer-to-peer services such as our Helpdesk, community support services and support groups.

 **Puppy sponsorship** is very popular for people who wish to support a puppy's training journey, for themselves or as a gift. Just £3 a month buys a fantastic welcome pack full of puppy-related goodies, and then regular training updates right through to the pup becoming a hearing dog partnered with a deaf adult or child.

 **Legacies** are a way of showing incredible kindness to help deaf people for years to come. They are so important because they account for over half our funding. We are included in Gifts in Wills for many, varied reasons. Some people have personal experience of deafness, whilst others are hearing dog partners who have been helped by the Charity. But many legators have simply been touched by the work we do, and have kindly chosen to support us in their Will.

Royal Patron – Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal • **President** – Sir Stuart Hampson CVO
Chair of Trustees – Faith Clark • **Vice Chair of Trustees** – Adrian Horsley JP
Chief Executive – Michele Jennings BA LL.B MBA

You can find out more about our trustees by visiting our website at hearingdogs.org.uk/trustees



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Registered charity in England and Wales no. 293358 and in Scotland no. SC040486
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