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A message from our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal



As Royal Patron of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, I continue to be impressed at the work of our charity and this year is no exception. We now have more hearing dogs working than ever before, which is something to be very proud of. It really is encouraging to see how our hearing dogs transform the lives of so many deaf people, helping them to overcome feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression. Of course this is as well as providing practical assistance and alerting to visual sounds that are part of everyday life.

Over the last year we successfully organised our new UK wide fundraising event, The Great British Dog Walk and were able to develop it for the second year, with double the amount of walks taking place. As we move from strength to strength, we have now established the vision for our new Welcome Centre in Buckinghamshire, opening our doors to our beneficiaries and supporters – ensuring we can change the lives of even more deaf people in years to come.

I would like to thank all our committed supporters, volunteers and staff and I look forward to celebrating our 35th anniversary in 2017.

A message from our chairman, Faith Clark



The year has passed by very swiftly but when I review our achievements, I see how productive the year has been and how far we have come on our ongoing journey to help deaf people. Once more we are celebrating the wonderful work of so many people. Whether staff or volunteers, the level of commitment and dedication to our Charity is inspirational, and we are rewarded every day by witnessing the transformation in the lives of so many adults and children with severe and profound hearing loss thanks to our clever, lovable hearing dogs.

At the heart of this charity too, are these superbly trained dogs who respond to the training and loving care they receive and go on to make a difference that is invaluable to their deaf partners. Not only do these valued canine companions alert to important sounds such as a baby's cry or a smoke alarm but they also provide an all-important visual indicator of deafness that makes interacting with the public so much easier for deaf people.

So it is with a sense of great celebration that we look back on another year of our Charity's successful story, delighting in the many individual stories of those who have benefited from our work. We can look forward to a new year with optimism and a renewed sense of purpose.

The impact of hearing loss

For anyone who loses their hearing or is deaf from birth, everyday life presents a great many challenges – situations that the rest of us take for granted, from hearing the alarm clock in the morning to hearing a fire alarm.

Feelings of isolation and loneliness often go hand in hand with deafness, impacting not only the deaf person but their family and friends too.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is here to improve life for those people, to keep them safe from harm, and to raise awareness of deafness and the issues that surround it.



In the UK 11.5 million* people suffer from some degree of hearing loss. For most of these people hearing loss will have a significant impact on how they can live their life.

LESS THAN

1%

of total investment in medical research from public and charitable funds is spent on hearing loss



Despite the numbers of people affected, the financial landscape is a challenging one. Where £1.11 is spent on hearing loss research for every person affected, £11.35 is spent per person on sight loss, and £19.79 spent on cancer research.

Hearing loss increases the risk of depression, anxiety and other mental health problems

It is common for people to underestimate the far reaching consequences of hearing loss for those affected. The issues do not stop at being unable to hear the world around you, being unaware of your name being called in a doctor's waiting room, or not knowing if there is someone ringing the doorbell.

x5

HEARING LOSS

increases the risk of developing dementia fivefold, even mild hearing loss doubles the risk



Hearing loss increases the risk of depression, anxiety and other mental health problems; makes dementia up to five times more likely in later years; and can limit people from achieving their full potential in the workplace.

Hearing loss has a significant impact on society generally in addition to the challenges it presents to individuals. The Ear Foundation has estimated the full cost to the UK economy at £30 billion once quality of life, social care and NHS costs are taken into account.

11.5m

people in the UK suffer from some degree of hearing loss



It's in this landscape that Hearing Dogs for Deaf People does all it can to train dogs and partner them with deaf people to help improve their lives. A hearing dog can be truly transformative for a deaf person, giving practical assistance, companionship and a new feeling of confidence to deal with the world around them.

Research spending in the UK per person affected:

Hearing loss	£1.11
Sight loss	£11.35
Cancer Research	£19.79

*Action on Hearing Loss 2015

WHAT HEARING DOGS DO

- Alert their partners to danger – smoke alarms at home, fire alarms in public places, fire drills in the workplace
- Alert their partners to important sounds – someone at the door, the telephone ringing, the alarm clock going off
- Provide companionship for those feeling isolated through their hearing loss
- Help their partners navigate the outside world

WHAT WE DO

- Breed and train puppies to become hearing dogs
- Socialise dogs so they are comfortable in any environment
- Partner dogs carefully to match the needs of individual people with hearing loss
- Deliver ongoing training, advice and support for the duration of the partnership – often 10–12 years



Our year in numbers

We are delighted to report that the past year has seen continued development and success, with more hearing dogs in the community than ever before.



931

Total number of hearing dogs



27

Successor dogs



836

Total number of working hearing dogs

324

(314 adults / 10 children)

Applicants for a hearing dog



95

Retired hearing dogs



25

Dual applicants



32

Total child partnerships



2,100+

Support visits this year

34

(25 with Guide Dogs /
9 Dual Disability)

Dual partnership
dogs

145

New hearing
dogs placed or
accredited before
31 March 2016

2,225

Hearing dog
partnerships
created
since 1982





My best friend – Kelly

Lisa has had hearing loss since she was born but became profoundly deaf as an adult. She has bilateral severe sensorineural hearing loss and intrusive tinnitus. Translated, that means she is deaf in both ears and has unwelcome sounds in her head most of the time.

Describing what it is like Lisa says: “I have worn hearing aids much of my adult life but normal sounds and voices are still inaudible. Syllables sound blurry, background noise overloads my senses to the point where I cannot concentrate or cope any more. I hear loud, then mixed-up, noises. Meeting people and trying to keep up with a conversation by lipreading is just not realistic – so I began not to bother most of the time. Concentrating so hard brings on panic and makes me lose control. It’s stressful and immensely tiring.”

Exhausted and worn down with the constant strain of trying to translate a hubbub of sounds into something her brain could comprehend, Lisa was mentally and physically exhausted and had a breakdown. Feeling so desperate she even tried to commit suicide. Realising she had to accept her hearing loss and as part of a new, positive

approach to her disability, Lisa decided to apply for a hearing dog.

“She has given me my independence back and allowed me to move on with my life again – step by step.”

Lisa was partnered with Kelly, a Labrador Retriever cross and her life has changed. Lisa says: “I loved her from the day she arrived but time has nurtured an even stronger bond of trust and confidence between us. We start our day with Kelly alerting me to my alarm clock (no chance of a lie-in!). When I am getting dressed she waits patiently, listening for alerts on my mobile phone or the doorbell to ring or the family calling her to ask her to ‘call Mum’ and take me to them. She has given me my independence back and allowed me to move on with my life again – step by step.

“From being isolated and a virtual recluse Kelly has changed my life – given me life even. I now feel confident enough to go out more – swimming, an art class, attending Rethink Mental Illness activities and hopefully even more new things soon.

“Kelly is my best friend. She is a loyal and devoted companion. She shares every day with me and keeps me safe even when I am asleep. Life is an adventure now; so much time has been lost and I’ve so much more to achieve.”



Highlights of 2015-2016



Over the last year we have trained 145 hearing dogs, which means we partnered more deaf children and adults with hearing dogs than ever before. We are a kind, happy and vibrant charity and here are just some of our other highlights from the year.

Michele Jennings
Chief Executive

CHILDREN IN NEED GRANT AWARDED

We were delighted to be awarded a grant of £22,000 from Children in Need. This enables us to partner more children with hearing dogs.



THIS MORNING – DEAF FOR THE DAY

ITV's **This Morning** engaged with deafness by allowing production team member 'Anthony' to go Deaf for the Day, to experience life with hearing loss. The follow-up story included a live studio interview with recipient Lisa Dower, with hearing dog Kelly.



A day in the life of a hearing dog



07.00AM Your hearing dog alerts you when your alarm goes off in the morning.



09.00AM Commuting to work and an announcement tells passengers the train is changing platforms. A hearing dog's burgundy jacket tells people their partner is deaf. Someone notices and tells you to change trains.



08.00AM Your baby is crying and the baby monitor is sounding, your dog lets you know your baby needs you.



11.00AM A fire has broken out in a shop and the fire alarm is sounding. Your hearing dog nudges their recipient and drops to the floor – the danger sign. Potentially, your hearing dog saves your life.



PLANNING PERMISSION FOR OUR NEW WELCOME CENTRE

Planning permission for a new Welcome Centre, designed with the needs of deaf children and adults in mind, was granted this year. The new centre, which includes a restaurant and education facilities, is due to open in 2017 as part of Hearing Dogs' 35th Anniversary celebrations and will be a welcoming place for dog lovers, local residents and visitors to relax and learn about deafness and the Charity.

GREAT BRITISH DOG WALK LAUNCHED IN PARLIAMENT

Building on the successes of our first Great British Dog Walk, we raised the bar to include 20 walks across the UK and created a national launch in Parliament which was covered both in the disability media and on London Live TV. It also raised awareness of Hearing Dogs and deaf issues with MPs.

NEW CRM SYSTEM

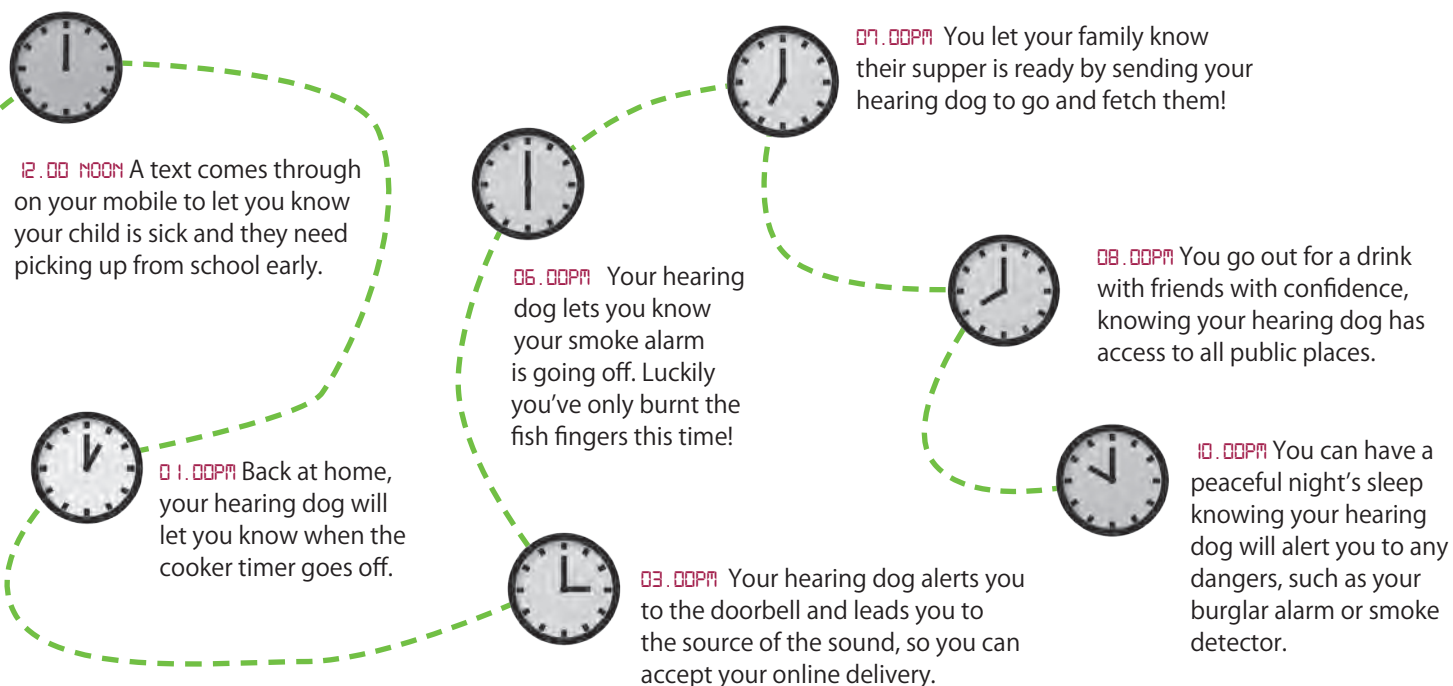
Our new CRM database system was introduced to create a hub of information that could be accessed throughout the Charity to allow greater sharing and streamlining for greater efficiency.

INSTAGRAM AND SNAPCHAT

We have a fantastic following on Facebook and Twitter. To reach new audiences we launched accounts on Instagram and Snapchat. We post cute puppy pictures, alongside training videos and what life is like behind-the-scenes at Hearing Dogs.

POINTS OF LIGHT AWARDS

One of our amazing volunteers, Dave Thompson received the Prime Minister's Points of Light award in September 2015, in recognition for his volunteer work with Hearing Dogs.



Puppy socialising and volunteer dog training

Socialising is a vital part of a hearing dog's development and our volunteer socialisers play a key role in this. They effectively take on one of our puppies at eight weeks old and work through our 'Puppy Stars', each of which marks a milestone in development. It's here that our puppies learn their basic obedience and develop good social behaviour, while we monitor their development. They also take their first steps towards 'soundwork' training. Gradually the puppies are introduced to new places and situations, helping them to become confident dogs, who can cope with their recipient's needs. At around 12–14 months they then go to stay with volunteers close to one of our two training centres located in Buckinghamshire and Yorkshire, for their 'formal' soundwork training with one of our experienced dog trainers. This means they learn to alert their deaf partner to sounds such as the doorbell, the alarm clock, smoke and fire alarm.

Meet David and Jilly Hay who have been involved with Hearing Dogs since 2003. Having socialised 34 of our hearing dogs they have now taken on the role of volunteer dog trainer. Our volunteer dog training is a new initiative to help us train hearing dogs and it means our puppies stay longer with their original socialisers, who go on to teach the dog its soundwork training, supported by our dog trainers. This helps us reach our training targets more efficiently and with greater value-for-money.

David and Jilly took part in our pilot volunteer dog training programme which has now been introduced as part of a new method of training. Anya, a gorgeous Cocker Spaniel, was the first dog Jilly trained all the way from pup to fully accredited hearing dog. Jilly says, "Anya was a very quick learner, very keen to please and it was with real joy and a sense of achievement that we watched her progress and gradually introduced her to new sounds and situations." Anya is now living with one of our child recipients, Leon who is 11 years old.



"We feel very proud to hand over a fully trained hearing dog to someone who really needs that dog – that gives us 'The Feel Good Factor' times a million!"



Jilly and David with current dogs in training Katy and Zorro, and Anya, who is now partnered with 11-year-old Leon.

Leon's story

Leon was born with a rare genetic disorder which affects, amongst other things, his vision, hearing, kidneys and bones. It's called Hadju-Cheney syndrome.

"Not being able to see or hear at bedtime was a huge problem for Leon," explains Leon's mum, Norma, "especially as he was getting older and staying awake for longer before he fell asleep. Leon would hear occasional noises but was unable to work out what they were. He would shout out 'Who is it? What's that?' He would often get out of bed and we were forever up and down the stairs resettling him. He even slept through a fire alarm when it went off one evening, which was a huge worry."

Before Leon had his hearing dog, school and friendships were also problematic, Norma continued, "We take for granted



the polite greetings children exchange at school. If someone said hello to Leon, he wouldn't hear them, they would call again and eventually they would give up. Friends learnt not to bother."

Leon now has no issue making eye contact with adults, and continuing a conversation.

Leon was partnered with the gorgeous Anya in October 2015, which totally transformed Leon's life.

Norma says: "His self-confidence has gone through the roof! Leon now has no issue making eye contact with adults, and continuing a conversation. This is such a

difference from the shy boy he once was. Leon now talks with confidence about Anya – his favourite subject.

"Leon is so much happier and now he has started secondary school, he looks forward to coming home from school to be reunited with his best friend – and it has certainly improved his street credibility with friends!

Bedtimes have become easier. Leon now has the confidence to be alone at night.

"Bedtimes have become easier. Leon now has the confidence to be alone at night. He knows Anya is with him and he doesn't need to worry, meaning he can get a good night's sleep before she wakes him up in the morning.

"The biggest difference we have noticed is the calming influence Anya brought not just to Leon, but the whole family."

Leon says: "Anya is my best friend – my fluffy best friend with a soggy nose!"



Our vital volunteers

Without the amazing commitment of our volunteer family we simply would not be able to perform to our current high standards and capacity, nor make our ambitious plans for the future.

We had 1,841 volunteers as of 31 March 2016, this is a tremendous number and we are so grateful for their generosity.

Over half have been volunteering between one and five years. An impressive 32% have been volunteering for six or more years.



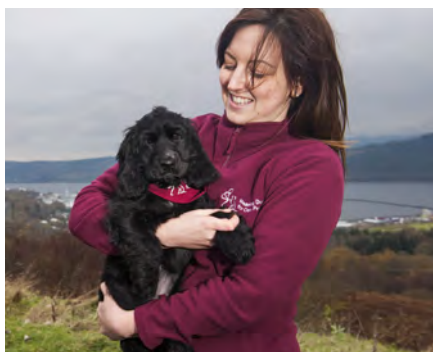
98%
would recommend
volunteering to others



One in four recipients are also volunteers. Our nationwide volunteering network assist Hearing Dogs in so many ways including puppy socialising and training, fostering more mature dogs, fundraising and supporting our office based staff. Additionally, volunteers generously provide other less-well-known services: we have volunteer translators, car valeters and a team of database volunteers have been assisting with the transition to the new CRM database.

A recent survey confirms that 95% of volunteers are satisfied with their volunteering experience and 98% would recommend it to others.

We are so thankful to each and every volunteer who dedicates their time and skills to helping Hearing Dogs – thank you!



Astor – the first puppy trained in Scotland

.....
Our puppy socialising areas now include Edinburgh, Newcastle and Cheshire.
.....



The role of volunteer dog trainer is now well established in Scotland and other locations, thereby extending our operational coverage and structure. In addition, we have expanded our puppy socialising scheme to Cheshire where the Charity already has a strong presence.

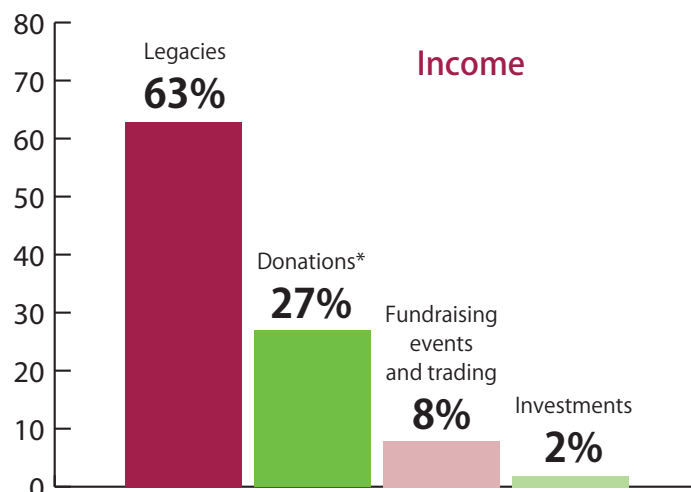


Abney – the first puppy trained in Cheshire

Financial summary April 2015 – March 2016

During 2015/16 we received total income of **£7.503 million** and we spent **£7.291 million**.

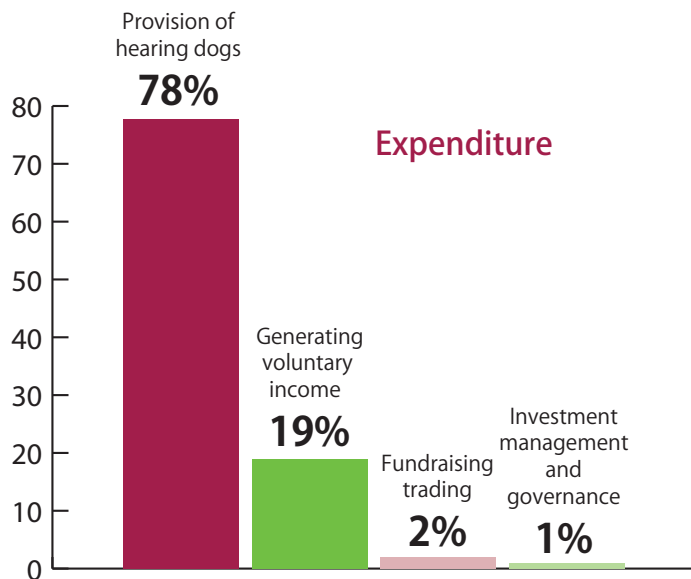
This resulted in a surplus of **£0.212 million** which, after deducting net investment losses of **£0.096 million**, resulted in a net movement in funds of **£0.116 million**.



Where our funds came from:

Income:	£000	%
Legacies	4,696	63
Donations *	2,032	27
Fundraising events and trading	605	8
Investments	132	2
Other income	38	-
Total income	7,503	100

*Donations including branch income, sponsorship and gift aid.



How our funds were used:

Expenditure:	£000	%
Provision of Hearing Dogs	5,654	78
Generating voluntary income	1,421	19
Fundraising trading	121	2
Investment management and governance	95	1
Total expenditure	7,291	100

This financial summary is taken from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016.
For a copy of the Trustees' report and accounts please e-mail info@hearingdogs.org.uk or telephone 01844 348100.

How you can help

Our life-changing work is funded entirely by donations from individuals, trusts, companies and community groups. We do not receive any government funding and are so grateful to all those who support our work.

Major gifts and charitable trusts

Major gifts from individuals and charitable trusts enable us to provide expert training for puppies to become hearing dogs, and support ongoing partnerships. A large donation can transform the lives of many people waiting for a hearing dog.

Corporate supporters

Companies are vital supporters of our work. We can assist you in engaging your customers or colleagues in order to help Hearing Dogs support deaf children and adults throughout the partnership.

Community groups

We are extremely grateful to all the community groups who raise vital funds and build awareness of the challenges faced by deaf people – highlighting the difference that a hearing dog can make.

Volunteers

Our volunteers and celebrity supporters give their time generously. Whether supporting the training of new hearing dogs through puppy socialising, taking part in events including The Great British Dog Walk, and securing media coverage for campaigns such as Deaf for the Day.

If you would like to get involved, either as a volunteer or a supporter, and help to create more life-changing partnerships please get in touch. Or you can find out more through our website, and sign up for updates about our work.

www.hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteering

Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

Volunteer

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

Fundraise

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

www.hearingdogs.org.uk/fundraise

Spread the word

- 🐾 Sign up for our e-newsletter
 - 🐾 Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
 - 🐾 Share our work with your friends and family
 - 🐾 Subscribe to our free e-newsletter
- www.hearingdogs.org.uk/subscribe

Our people

Trustees

Chairman: Faith Clark

Vice Chairman: Dr Bruce Fogle MBE DVM MRCVS

Honorary Treasurer:

Air Vice Marshal David Crwys-Williams CB FCIPT FCIM

John Bower MBE BVSc MRCVS

Gary Burchett MBA FCMI CMgr

Andrew Freeland MB BS FRCS

Dr Hilary Harris MB ChB FRCGP

Dr Vicky Harrison MA DPhil

Jeremy Holmes MA

Adrian M Horsley JP DL

Vicky Hunt

Ken Keir OBE

Jenny Smith MBE

Ben Shuckburgh (retired July 2015)

President

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns GCB KCVO CBE FRAeS

Life Vice-Presidents

Anthony Hilberry B VetMed MRCVS (died September 2015)

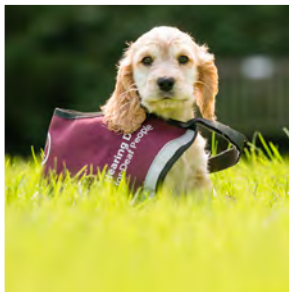
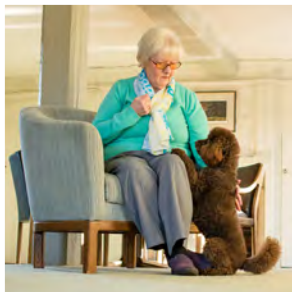
Anthony Blunt MBE

Doreen McInnes

Directors

Michele Jennings BA LL.B MBA

Paul Hester FCA



www.hearingdogs.org.uk

The Grange

Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough HP27 9NS
T 01844 348100 (Text relay 18001 01844 348100) F 01844 348101
E info@hearingdogs.org.uk W www.hearingdogs.org.uk

The Beatrice Wright Centre

Hayton Road, Bielby, East Yorkshire YO42 4JP
T 01759 322299 (Text relay 18001 01759 322299) F 01759 322298
E bwcinfo@hearingdogs.org.uk

Registered charity in England and Wales no: 293358 and in Scotland no: SC040486
Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal