

Working with a notetaker

You'll find this factsheet useful if you are deaf or have hearing loss and want to find out how a notetaker can support you, or if you need to book a notetaker for an employee, student or client.

Contents

- What does a notetaker do? **2**
- When is a notetaker needed? **3**
- Who pays for communication support? **3**
- How do I book a notetaker? **4**
- How many notetakers will I need? **5**
- How much do notetakers charge? **5**
- What else should I consider when booking a notetaker? **5**
- Where can I get more information about communication support? **6**

i If you'd like this factsheet in Braille, large print or audio, please contact our Information Line - see last page for contact details.



Note: In this factsheet, we use the term 'hearing loss' to refer to all levels of loss – from mild to profound.

What does a notetaker do?

A professional notetaker is qualified and trained to take notes for people with hearing loss, and others who have difficulty taking notes themselves. They provide accurate notes that summarise spoken information, leaving people who use a sign language interpreter or lipread to focus on what's being said.

There are different types of notetaker: **manual**, **electronic** and **digital** ('digi').

Manual notetaking

Manual notetakers are trained to take clear notes in handwritten English for the client to read later. The notetaker will go to the same lecture or meeting as the client and sit within listening distance of the speaker. Some manual notetakers might be able to type up their notes and email them to the client after an assignment.

Electronic notetaking

Electronic notetakers provide communication support for people who are comfortable reading English at high speed. They type a real-time summary of what's said using a laptop computer – this is sometimes linked to a second laptop that the client can read from.

The client should also be able to type messages to the notetaker and add their own notes, if they want to.

At the end of the assignment, the electronic notetaker should provide the client with their notes by email, in hard copy or on a memory stick.

Digi-notetaking

Digi-notetakers use a digital pen to take notes. The digital pen writes with ink on paper, but it also captures the notetaker's handwriting and turns it into data that's displayed as text when transferred to a computer.

The client can receive the paper notes at the end of the session, and the electronic notes by email shortly afterwards.

According to the Association of Notetaking Professionals (ANP), many clients prefer electronic notes – so they can change the font and add their own notes. Digi-notes combine the ease of handwritten notes with the convenience of electronic notes.

Please note: Notetakers can only provide a summary of spoken information. If someone requires a word-for-word account, they'll need a speech-to-text reporter.



You may find our factsheet *Working with a speech-to-text reporter* useful. Visit the ANP website – anpnotetakers.co.uk – for more information about the different types of notetaker.

When is a notetaker needed?

Notetakers are needed in situations such as:

- college and university lectures
- meetings and training at work
- conferences and presentations
- medical appointments.

They work mainly in further education (post-16 learning) and higher education (post-18 learning). They are also trained to support people who are deaf or have hearing loss at work and at events. However, they don't take minutes.

Confidentiality

Notetakers offer a confidential service, but some might pass information about a student's work to a teacher. They should agree this with the student first. If sensitive issues are to be discussed, confidentiality should be specified in the notetaker's contract.

Who pays for communication support?

Under the Equality Act (the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland), private, public and voluntary sectors need to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that people who are disabled aren't placed at a substantial disadvantage. These adjustments can include providing equipment and communication support, such as a notetaker, for their employees or those who use their services who have hearing loss.

Public services, organisations and businesses may be able to get government funding to help cover the costs of any equipment and communication support needed by their employees or those who use their services (see below).

People who need communication support for private events, such as family gatherings, may need to book and pay for it themselves.

 You can find out more about the Equality Act in our **Your rights** range of factsheets.

At work

Access to Work is a government-run scheme that provides practical advice and support to people who are disabled and their employers. It may help to pay for any communication support and equipment that people with hearing loss need at interviews and in the workplace. It's usually the employer who arranges and pays for

the support – they then claim back the approved costs from Access to Work.

Large organisations and businesses may need to contribute towards the cost of the equipment and communication support.

 Find out more at [gov.uk/access-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) or at nidirect.gov.uk if you live in Northern Ireland.

In education

Schools and colleges should arrange and pay for communication support for students with hearing loss in primary, secondary and further education. Higher education students with hearing loss should be able to get Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) to pay for their communication support and equipment needs. All institutions have a student support or disability office for further information.

 To find out more about DSAs, contact your national student finance body ([see pages 6-7](#)).

When using health and social care services

National guidance and quality standards aim to improve the accessibility of NHS and social care services for people who are deaf or have hearing loss. They should provide and pay for all communication support needs.

 For more information, and to find out about our campaign to improve access to healthcare, visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/ontherecord

How do I book a notetaker?

You can book communication support, including notetakers, through a variety of professional bodies, local organisations, public services and charities, including Action on Hearing Loss (see 'Access Solutions', [page 6](#), for contact details).

If you're booking a notetaker on behalf of someone else, make sure you've checked what their communication support preferences are before making the booking.

Make sure the notetaker is qualified

Check that the notetaker is registered with The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) – [see page 6](#) for details.

A registered notetaker will know about deaf issues, as well as having the relevant skills and professional training. All registered notetakers abide by the NRCPD code of conduct and are subject to the NRCPD complaints procedure. They are completely impartial and won't give advice or express views while working with you.

Qualified communication support workers (CSWs) may also be trained in notetaking. You can get advice on the level of notetaker you'll need for your assignment from the organisation or freelance professional you book with.

How many notetakers will I need?

Usually, you'll only need one notetaker, but if your assignment is for more than two hours, you'll need two. Notetakers need regular breaks, but in practice they often work for up to one and a half hours. Don't expect the notetaker to work through breaks.

If you need communication support during breaks, you might need to book two notetakers.

How much do notetakers charge?

Fees vary, so ask how much you'll be charged when you make the booking. There will usually be a minimum call-out charge – for example, the notetaker may charge for two hours, even if you only use them for one. However, if you use the notetaker regularly – for university lectures, for example – you might be able to book them by the hour.

What else should I consider when booking a notetaker?

Book in advance

It's important to book all types of communication support as early as possible – about 4-6 weeks before you need the service.

Try to make sure that you book a notetaker who knows about the topic being discussed. For example, if you need a notetaker for a science lecture at college, ask for someone who is familiar with scientific terms.

Help the notetaker prepare

It will help the notetaker to know in advance what your assignment involves so they can prepare for it properly. Let them know about any particular terms or abbreviations that will be used. They may need to speak to, or see, whoever's organising the session, to get advance copies of handouts or any other useful information.

Deaf awareness and sign language training

We offer a variety of flexible training options to meet your organisation's specific requirements. All of our trainers are deaf themselves and use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language. This means they are able to bring their personal experience of the barriers deaf people face every day, guaranteeing an immersive training experience.

To find out more, contact our Access Solutions team:

Telephone: **0333 240 5658**

(calls welcome via the Next Generation Text Service)

Email: access.solutions@hearingloss.org.uk

Or visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/business

Where can I get more information about communication support?

Action on Hearing Loss

The other factsheets in our **Communication** range are:

- *Booking a sign language interpreter*
- *Working with a communication support worker*
- *Working with a lipspeaker*
- *Working with a speech-to-text reporter*
- *Communication support for people who are deafblind*
- *Careers supporting people who are deaf.*

You can order these from our Information Line ([see last page](#)) or download them from our website at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/factsheets

Access Solutions

To book communication support through Action on Hearing Loss, contact our Access Solutions team:

Telephone: **0845 685 8000**
Textphone: **0845 685 8001**
Email: communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk

You can also book online at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communication

Other organisations

Association of Notetaking Professionals

Professional body representing electronic and manual notetakers, including information about routes to qualification.

Email (online contact form): lipspeaking.co.uk/contact-us
anpnotetakers.co.uk/contact
Website: anpnotetakers.co.uk

Student Finance England

Telephone: **0300 100 0607**
Textphone: **0300 100 0622**
Website: gov.uk/student-finance-register-login

Student Finance NI

Telephone: **0300 100 0077**
Telephone (postgraduate tuition fee loan enquiries): **0300 100 0493**
Website: studentfinancenl.co.uk

Student Awards Agency for Scotland

Website: saas.gov.uk
For contact details, click on the 'CONTACT US' tab on the home page and follow the instructions.

Student Finance Wales

Telephone: **0300 200 4050**

Textphone: **0300 100 1693**

Telephone (postgraduate loan enquiries):
0300 100 0494

Textphone (postgraduate loan enquiries):
0300 100 1693

Website: studentfinancewales.co.uk

The National Registers for Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD)

NRCPD regulate communication and language professionals who work with deaf and deafblind people. It holds registers of interpreters for deafblind people, lipspeakers, notetakers, sign language interpreters, sign language translators and speech to text reporters.

Telephone: **0191 383 1155**

SMS: **07974 121 594**

Email: enquiries@nrcpd.org.uk

Website: nrcpd.org.uk

Information you can trust

We are certified by The Information Standard as a producer of high-quality, evidence-based information.

Did you find this factsheet helpful?

We'd love to know what you think of this factsheet – please email us at reviewpanel@hearingloss.org.uk

If you'd like to join our Readers' Panel, to help us create new publications and improve existing ones, please let us know.

Further information from Action on Hearing Loss

Our expert information covers everything you need to know about:

- hearing loss and deafness
- tinnitus
- ear problems and treatments
- hearing aids and cochlear implants
- useful products and technology
- communication tactics and support
- benefits and grants
- your rights.

Visit our website actiononhearingloss.org.uk or call our Information Line ([see last page](#)) for information, support and publications. You can also find out about services in your area, our hearing research, and how you can get involved.

Please help us support others

We provide our leaflets, factsheets and Information Line service free of charge to anyone affected by deafness, tinnitus or hearing loss in the UK. We rely on the generosity of our supporters to help us do this. We would be very grateful if you would consider making a donation - of as little or as much as you can afford.

Please send a cheque, payable to Action on Hearing Loss, to:

Freepost RTLX-CZKX-BTTZ
Action on Hearing Loss
1-3 Highbury Station Road
London N1 1SE

(No stamp needed)

Donate online at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/icanhelp

Or make a donation over the phone by credit or debit card:

 **0203 227 6182**

 **0203 227 6185**

Thank you.

Our purpose is to help people confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss to live the life they choose. We enable them to take control of their lives and remove the barriers in their way.

To find out more about what we do and how you can support us, go to actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss Information Line

Telephone **0808 808 0123**
Textphone **0808 808 9000**
SMS **0780 000 0360**
(standard text message rates apply)
Email **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

Join us

 Action on Hearing Loss

 @ActionOnHearing

Publication date: August 2017. Review date: August 2019.

Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.
A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926). A1205/0817