

Hear Hear

News from Hearing Help Essex

Spring 2022 – Issue 60

Welcome to our latest newsletter! 2021 proved to be another challenging year for us all. Having a baby in the middle of last winter's lockdown showed me the real pressures that the NHS faces and made me more determined than ever to ensure Hearing Help Essex continues its fantastic work as a supportive friend to our NHS hearing aid users. What a relief it was for us to be able to recruit Todorina Hammond as Interim CEO, who kept HHE sailing smoothly throughout an ever changing and testing environment. I am so grateful to Todorina for all her work and thrilled that she can continue working at HHE in her new role as Service Development Manager. With thanks to the vaccine, we now feel we are emerging from this dreadful pandemic, and HHE is almost back to running all sessions. As always, we couldn't do the work we do without the amazing work and support of our Volunteers, Staff, Funders, and Friends of Hearing Help Essex. Thank you for all you do, we are so grateful.



Best wishes, Sophie Ede,

NHS Hearing Aid Support Service

This service continues to go from strength to strength. We are proud to be working closely with the NHS Audiology teams across Essex and continuously review our practices to ensure we are supporting NHS hearing aid users and making the most of our combined resources. There are still a few existing sessions that we have not been able to resume due to Covid restrictions at the various sites, however we are thrilled to report that we are now able to deliver support to the same numbers of people we saw in 2019 (pre-pandemic). Covid forced us to move to an appointment only system and that has worked so well that post Covid we will no longer operate as a 'walk-in' service and all appointments must be booked in advance. There is an update later in the newsletter about our new registration and booking process.

We aim to resume our Saffron Walden, Thaxted, and Finchingfield sessions over the coming months; if you live in this area and would like an update when these sessions resume, please email sarah.johnson@hearinghelpessex.org.uk who will be able to email you to let you know when appointments become available in these areas.

2021 in numbers

4,603 appointments

4,645 hearing aids retubed

573 Home Visits

51 active volunteers

8 new volunteers trained

www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk

e. info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk t. 01245 496347 txt. 07950 406 173

Hearing Help Essex Resource Centre, 158 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0LD

Registered Charity number: 1113498



New Venue – Coggeshall

Thanks to a grant from Coggeshall Nursing Trust, and the support of Cllr Sue Wilson, we are delighted to announce that a new session will be running in Coggeshall from April 2022. These sessions will be held once a month at Christ Church on Stoneham Street, and appointments can be booked by contacting our team by phone or email, or online using our new booking service.

Booking Appointments Online service now available

We are thrilled to announce that service users can now register and then book appointments online via our website. This enables service users to access our bookings service at any time of day – even when the office is closed. By booking online, you can easily see the calendar of all available sessions, and pick a venue, date, and time convenient for you.

You can also still book appointments by calling or texting the admin team using our usual contact details. The weblink to book is: www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk/bookings



Digital Transformation



The pandemic has accelerated many changes for people. Importantly for Hearing Help Essex, it enabled us to introduce a new data management and bookings system with funding for digital transformation granted by Essex Community Foundation. The funding has helped us to improve our services, increase transparency, GDPR compliancy and of course improve our efficiency.

With this funding we have embedded a new database system, using the platform Zoho Creator. It is very easy to store, manage and navigate using this system and most importantly, we have moved away from the paper-based processing of data. We have also implemented a new booking system, which has enabled us to keep our sessions running in a covid safe way, and, as mentioned above, the feedback on this appointments-based service has been so positive that we plan to keep our services appointment-based for the foreseeable future.

We recently received 30 tablet computers from Essex County Council, which we believe will help to keep us on our track for our digital transformation aims. These will be available to volunteers over the coming months to enable them to make follow up appointments when a client is with us and also to input information directly to our system rather than completing paper forms. The Good Things Foundation (GTF) has recently called on all charities to equip people with soft skills to motivate them to use technology and to build their confidence. And who is best to model this than our volunteers? They are well placed to demonstrate their digital skills to the wider community. We hope the volunteers who wish to use the tablets will enjoy the new process.

It has been a big challenge for both staff and volunteers to adapt to the new systems, but it is one we have all embraced positively, and are now seeing the real time benefits for our services users. We are hugely grateful to Essex Community Foundation, Essex County Council, and to Lindsay Hodgson of Catch Impact, who have supported us with this transition.



Photo shows Cllr John Spence presenting HHE Service Development Manager Todorina Hammond with the tablet computers.

Equipment Update

Thanks to funding from Essex County Council we have been able to purchase updated equipment to demonstrate to our service users. These include:

- New Conversation Listeners and TV Listeners for our Outreach Workers to demonstrate and loan to the housebound.
- Updated TV Listeners with both neck loops for hearing aid wearers and stethosets for those without for demonstration in our Resource Centre.
- A New Bluetooth neck loop system with an integrated microphone for wireless phone calls where the sound is sent directly to the wearer's hearing aids.
- A Premium Conversation Listener and Neck loop - with multiple microphones, the wearer can select the voices they want to hear. A clever piece of kit designed to help the wearer focus on conversation when in a group or in a noisy environment.

We are aware that several Essex hospitals are now issuing Bluetooth hearing aids to those who might benefit as they come in for their hearing aid reviews (this varies from 3-5 years depending on each hospital trusts policy). We do have Bluetooth equipment available for loan, so if you need support with this please do contact us.

If you would like to come to our Resource Centre to see the equipment we are demonstrating, you will be very welcome. Contact Janine to arrange an appointment at help@hearinghelpessex.org.uk



Talks are back!

We are thrilled that we have begun to start receiving invitations to give talks 'in-person' again now that groups and clubs are able to meet. Whilst delivering these online worked well, there really is nothing like being in a room with people and seeing their eyes light up as they discover the amazing world of hearing loss!

Thank you to Quadrant Braintree, St Mary's Open Group, Great Leighs WI, and to Aldham WI who have hosted us recently and made generous donations towards our work.

Are you a member of a group or club that has guest speakers? We would love to be able to come and deliver our fun and informative talk - please email: info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk or call our office for further information.

"I just wanted to thank you very much for coming to speak to us last night. I know our members found it really interesting - I think maybe you'll be getting some more calls! It was a fascinating insight into the world of hearing loss and we all learnt a lot from it - we'll certainly help spread the word of the great work you do." - Aldham WI

Volunteer News

We say it a lot, but we really do mean it when we say that **all** our amazing volunteers really have been 'Super-Hear-O's' throughout the pandemic. Each and every one of them has helped us through another difficult year, not just coping with the challenges of the pandemic but also bearing with us whilst we have been implementing a new database and online booking system.



Everyone has been kept particularly busy with fully booked appointments at sessions and a growing number of home visit requests. We want to say a special thank you to Mike Wilson, Andrew Bell, Cheryl Harris and John Ruth who have taken on an incredible amount of the 'doorstep' and home visits for us recently, not just going the extra mile but the extra 100s of miles between them!

We also want to say a big thank you to Tracie Greygoose who has been volunteering at HHE HQ manning the phone line one day a week and keeping our database up to date. Tracie has been invaluable in helping us implement and test the new database and booking system and has given up so much of her time to volunteer.



There have been dozens of occasions where volunteers have covered sessions at short notice, travelled further than usual, or really gone out of their way to ensure a service user gets the best possible care and attention. We couldn't be prouder of our volunteer family and feel very lucky to have the team that we do.

Would you like to volunteer with us?

With the introduction of new services, and new venues, we are currently looking to recruit volunteers to join our award winning team.

We have vacancies in the following roles:

- Tinnitus Support Volunteer
- Hearing Screening Volunteer
- Hearing Aid Support Service Volunteers in Chelmsford, Braintree, Basildon, Maldon and Uttlesford Districts.
- Meet & Greet hosts in Uttlesford district.

For further information, and detailed role descriptions please visit our [website](#), or email info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk



Trustee News



Farewell to Richard Black

Richard has been a Trustee for HHE for over 20 years, most recently serving as our Treasurer. Richard has taken a well-deserved retirement, and will be sorely missed.

It is hard to put in to words the huge amount of work he did to ensure HHE thrived. The landscape of charity funding means that it really is a constant job making funding applications, sending reports to funders, budgeting, and planning. For many years Richard did this, and even when he did hand over these responsibilities to the charity manager, he was always there in the wings ready to prepare a budget or report, sometimes with only a few hours' notice! His knowledge and experience of charity governance was always appreciated by our other Board Members, and I know we all feel we have learnt a lot from Richard over the years. We simply wouldn't be where we are today without Richard's dedication. Thank you, Richard, we will miss you and want to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy retirement.

Introducing New Trustees

Nick Watson—Treasurer



"I have lived in Essex my whole life. After university I qualified as an accountant working with a top ten firm until my "retirement" to work for myself twenty years ago, firstly in Brentwood and latterly in Chelmsford.

I knew of Sophie's outstanding musical abilities from her school days attending the same school as my children. Years later my daughter alerted me to Hearing Help Essex, where Sophie was CEO, and their need for a new Treasurer. The role appealed to me not only as an accountant but also because it would allow me to give something back to the community in my latter professional days and beyond."

Deesha Bedia—Trustee



"Hello, my name is Deesha and I am an Audiologist with both NHS and private work experience. I have settled as an Audiologist in the private sector with Click Hearing. I initially was exposed to Audiology services when an elderly family member went to have their hearing aids fitted. I could see how much improvement this brought them and was truly inspired to learn how to help individuals with hearing difficulties. From obtaining my undergraduate degree, I went on to gaining a masters as well which has allowed me to broaden my expertise with Paediatric Audiology and balance testing as well. I am passionate

about my role and keen to improve the quality of life for individuals who have hearing difficulty. I joined Hearing Help Essex to help provide Audiology knowledge to the team and to also join the effort on raising awareness of hearing loss."

**Hearing
Help Essex**

Join our Team!

We are looking for committed individuals to expand the range of Trustee skills as well as to consolidate existing skills, who can support the future growth of the Charity. We require dynamic and motivated people who are sympathetic to the aims and objectives of Hearing Help Essex to fulfil these voluntary duties. We want to have a wide range of people on the Board, and seek to be representative of the diverse population of the County and the people that we support. We are particularly keen to hear from individuals with experience in commissioning, grant making, and marketing.



News from Todorina Hammond, Service Development Manager

New service: Tinnitus Support Service

Our new Tinnitus Support Service is a pilot project that will offer information, advice, and guidance to those struggling with tinnitus. This pilot project will aim to establish whether HHE should seek to provide a permanent service and evaluate how we can tailor the service to suit the individual needs of our local populations. We are very fortunate to have the professional help of our Trustee, Jane Smith, who is a hearing therapist with huge knowledge of this troublesome and life changing condition.

This project aims to offer a safe space to deliver low-level emotional support and guidance in a relaxed environment and will not be offering clinical support. Our staff and volunteers will offer an interactive service along with relevant information and coping techniques for living with tinnitus. We are grateful to Provide CIC Foundation for a grant to enable this pilot project to go ahead.

Tinnitus affects an estimated one in ten adults in the UK and, when it gets more severe, is sometimes associated with the potential for reduced emotional wellbeing, depression, and anxiety. A study led by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) with support from the British Tinnitus Association (BTA) reveals that tinnitus is being exacerbated by Covid. The study also noted that as well as increasing the severity of tinnitus symptoms, the pandemic has also made it more difficult for people to access healthcare support for the condition.



What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the perception of noises in the head and/or ear which have no external source. Those living with the condition typically endure a constant or intermittent ringing, buzzing, hissing, whistling or other noise. It is not a disease or illness; it is a symptom generated within the auditory system and usually caused by an underlying condition. The noise may be in one or both ears, or it may feel like it is in the head. It is difficult to pinpoint its exact location. It may be low, medium or high pitched and can be heard as a single noise or as multiple components, at varying volumes.

Something has occurred to generate the brain's interest in it and it has been picked up by the part of the brain that identifies activity as sound. If we understand that as human beings our reaction to anything new or different is to monitor it until it becomes the norm or is deemed as safe, you can begin to understand why we initially find the tinnitus quite intrusive.

If you would like to be involved in this pilot project, either as a service user or as a volunteer, please email Todorina at: todorina.hammond@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

Lipreading Classes

Do you have difficulty following conversation even though you may wear a hearing aid? Is your hearing loss making you feel isolated? If you have become deaf or hard of hearing then lipreading can help improve communication. Attending a lipreading class can help you to manage your hearing loss in a relaxed environment. Local lipreading teachers Helen Perry and Jacqui Chamoun have joined forces to provide lipreading and managing hearing loss classes in Chelmsford, Brentwood, and Southend. Their next course starts in May and you can register an interest by contacting Helen on 07951571967 or rmls.lipreading@gmail.com.



New service: Preliminary Hearing Check

World Hearing Day 2022 theme: To hear for life, listen with care!

It is important to talk about our hearing, but what could you do if you suspect you have hearing loss? How can you be sure you have hearing loss? Do you think that others are mumbling? Or do you often find yourself increasing the volume of the television?

The truth is that hearing loss can affect anyone and often progresses gradually, which makes it difficult to notice until you experience some real struggles. As an initial guide, one way to address our worries is to use an online hearing check tool. If you are confident, you can undertake a preliminary hearing check online from the comfort of your home. However, if you wish to have a chat in a relaxed atmosphere our team of trained staff and volunteers are here to help you!



With thanks to funding from Fowler Smith and Jones (FSJ) Trust, we are launching a Hearing Screening Service in April 2022. The screening test that we will offer at our Resource Centre in Chelmsford has been selected with the help of one of our Trustees, Deesha Bedia, an audiologist. The preliminary check will help us confirm if an individual needs to see an audiologist for a more precise hearing test, which will establish the level of hearing loss and how mild or severe it is. The volunteers at HHE will explain the next steps and will share their experiences, or even show you their own hearing aids and the wonders that this little instrument can do!

Hearing loss has far-reaching effects on health and well-being, such as links with dementia, and poor mental health. In 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the 'World report on hearing' that highlighted the increasing number of people living with, and at risk of hearing loss. The WHO advice is for an annual follow-up test which can help catch the hearing issues early.

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers is here to offer support and encouragement in this journey, so if you have any concerns about your hearing, please do not hesitate to contact us for guidance.

Do you hear the birds? New Look for Resource Centre

Birdsong is often a sound that people appreciate the most when fitted with new hearing aids. As a high frequency, and quiet sound, it can be one of those sounds that you don't realise you are missing – such a shame as it is one of nature's free gifts to us which should be enjoyed by all! This was the inspiration behind the new window display, designed by Georgia Coote, which was installed in the Autumn, using funding from Provide.

The new colourful design of the window is eye-catching and also gives us flexibility to change content so we can keep the information displayed relevant and interesting to anyone passing by our Moulsham Street Centre. It will be a great space for us to raise awareness of our services, and of any hearing loss related news!

We are grateful to Provide CIC Foundation for funding this project, and to Todorina Hammond and Janine Kent for overseeing the design and installation process.



Ways to support our work

A Very BIG Thank you to all our Friends and Supporters who have give so generously each year.

Can you help us to do more? There are many ways to support our work, which will help us to provide services to even more people living with hearing loss.

LIFE IS
BETTER
WITH
FRIENDS

Would you like to make a regular donation to Hearing Help Essex? Why not join our Friendship Scheme? The Friendship Scheme has been established for over 20 years and is a great way to stay up to date with our latest news. By clicking [HERE](#) you will be able to download our Friendship Form to complete and send back to us. If you would like us to post you a hard copy please email us with your

The collection tins at our sessions have raised over **£5,500** this year which is a fantastic amount. Do look out for these if you have some spare change in your pocket! Every little helps!



Wonderful.org is an online platform which allows you to set up fundraising pages or make a one-off donation. This could be for a sponsored walk, bake off, or event; let your imagination run free! If you do decide to run a fundraising event for Hearing Help Essex do let us know, and we can provide you with leaflets and supporting resources.

Wonderful

Donate With
PayPal

Paypal Donate allows you to make one-off, or regular donations to Hearing Help Essex and also enables us to claim Gift Aid on your donation, which means we can claim an extra 25% on each donation.

smile.amazon.co.uk

Thank you to all those who shop using Smile already - Hearing Help Essex has received £334 via this scheme!

Remember that when shopping with Amazon, if you log in via smile.amazon.co.uk and select our charity, you can help raise funds for Hearing Help Essex at no extra cost!

THE ESSEX LOTTERY

Hearing Help Essex



- Help give our fundraising a boost
- Tickets cost just £1 a week
- Win up to £25,000
- Play now and you could win a £1,000 B&Q voucher

PLAY NOW:

Go to www.essexlottery.co.uk and search for: Hearing Help Essex



Supporters must be 16 years of age or older. See website for Terms & conditions. Enter by 23rd April 2022

Legacy Giving

We are proud to have supported so many Essex residents with their hearing loss, but with approximately 300,000 people living with hearing loss in Essex there is so much more we can do.

We have ambitious plans for the future and with your help, believe we can make a positive difference to the lives of many more.



If you would like to support the charity in the future, a legacy gift is an easy way to say 'thank you'. We are often asked about legacy giving; Below you will find advice from the professionals at 'Remember a Charity' about legacy giving:

Gifts in Wills are vital to the work of most charities. After you've taken care of loved ones, you may wish to leave a gift in your Will to your favourite charity and pass on something wonderful to future generations.

It's a little-known fact that many charities wouldn't survive without gifts in Wills. By remembering your favourite charities in this way, you're ensuring that their good work lives on. The donation can be as small or large as you like – every gift makes a big difference.

How to leave a gift in your Will to charity

Leaving a gift in your Will to charity is easier than you might think – just follow the following steps:

- Make a note of the charity name, address and registered charity number to write your Will. For example, if you wanted to support Hearing Help Essex the details would be:

Hearing Help Essex
158 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0LD
Registered Charity Number: 1113498

- Visit rememberacharity.org.uk to see their guide on making a Will for advice on what you need to consider when writing your Will.
- Provide your solicitor or Will writer with details of your chosen charity

Updating an existing Will to include a gift to charity

If you want to leave a gift to charity but you've already made a Will, that's no problem – there are a couple of ways you can change it.

1. Write a new Will

The simplest way is to write a new Will. Once written, any Wills made by that person in the past become void. In fact, most Wills will start by reciting that you're writing a Will and that you're revoking previous Wills. You can write a new Will with a professional advisor at your solicitors.

2. Codicils

The other way is to write a codicil, which is a document used to make changes to an existing Will. It's used as a way to make simple amendments like adding a charity, changing a gift amount or adding an executor. This is all quite straightforward but problems can occur if you ever want to cancel the Will in the future. When you cancel a Will that contains a codicil, the codicil does not get cancelled automatically, so when you write a new Will it can create inconsistencies and legal problems. To avoid this, make sure that any new Will clearly states that you are revoking all Wills and codicils previously made.

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS

2nd – 8th May 2022



Deaf Awareness week is promoted by the UK Council on Deafness, and each year, Hearing Help Essex do what we can to help raise awareness of the challenges faced by those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This year, we are taking the opportunity to showcase our services, and will have a range of events running throughout the week. We are still deciding the schedule for the week, but do know we will be running the below events.

If you would like to join any of these events, please either telephone or email the office to register your interest (full contact details can be found on the front of this newsletter). **Spaces will be limited, so we will offer these on a first come, first serve basis.**

Resource Centre Open Day

Hearing Aid Support Session

**Information and Advice Group Sessions:
Making Conversations Clearer**

**Lipreading Class Taster Session led
by Helen Perry**

Tinnitus Support Appointments

Our Resource Centre Open Day will take place on Wednesday 4th May 2022 and will run from 10am - 3pm. There will be the opportunity to meet our Staff, Trustees, and Volunteers, and learn more about the services that we offer. Due to space limitations, we will be asking visitors to book a half hour slot in order to manage numbers on the day. If you would like to attend, please email info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

Useful contacts:

Partner Organisations

ECL Sensory Service

03330 133 262

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

0300 303 0088

Royal Association for Deaf People

0300 688 2525

Independent Ear Wax Removal:

Please mention HHE when booking

Essex Clear Ears, Rayleigh

T. 07862 269 275

W. essexclearears.co.uk

Christ Church Clinic, Braintree

T. 01376 329524

W. christchurchclinics.co.uk

Digiclear Gt Dunmow/Bishop's Stortford

T. 01279 757077

W. digiclearhearing.co.uk

Click Hearing, Chelmsford/Billericay

T. 0800 6121 345

W. clickhearing.com

Hearing Care Centre, Colchester and North East Essex

T. 01206 760839

W. skeelshearingh.co.uk

County Hearing Care, Brentwood

T. 01277 264938

W. countyhearing.co.uk

Essex Ears, Billericay/Shenfield

T. 07444 016163

W. essexears.com

NHS Audiology Departments

Addenbrooke's Hospital

01223 217797

Basildon Hospital

01268 394732

Broomfield Hospital

01245 513237

St. Margaret's Hospital

01279 827126

Colchester Hospital

01206 744532

Southend Hospital

01702 385019

Purchasing Equipment?

The following companies send us a donation if you mention our name when ordering. For further advice please contact the Resource Centre.

Hearing Products

Please quote HHE/REF

Telephone: 01614 808003

www.hear4you.com/shop

Sarabec – quote HHE

Telephone: 01642 247789

Text phone: 01642 244148

www.sarabec.com

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support:



Uttlesford District Council



Walter Farthing Trust

Grants to benefit people in Mid-Essex

The Coggeshall Nursing Trust

The Fun Walk Trust

NHS Hearing Aid Support Session Venues 2022

Chelmsford District

Age Concern Kathy Mapes Day Centre, CM1 1NL

Moulsham Lodge Clinic, Lilac Close, CM2 9NY

Parkside Community Hub, Melbourne, CM1 2DX

Hearing Help Essex Resource Centre, Moulsham Street, CM2 0LD

Writtle Parish Office, The Green, CM1 3DT

Danbury Mission, Maldon road, CM3 4QL

South Woodham Ferrers, Crouch Vale Medical Centre, CM3 5QP

Braintree District

St Michael's Hospital, 142 Rayne road, CM7 2QU

Witham URC Church, CM8 2UX

Coggeshall Christ Church, CO6 1UH

Hatfield Peverel Community Centre, CM3 2HP

Basildon District

Pitsea Dipple Medical Centre, SS13 3HQ

Wickford Library, SS12 0AG

Maldon District

St Peter's Hospital Assessment & Rehabilitation Unit, CM9 6EG

Heybridge Plantation Hall, CM9 4AL

Burnham on Crouch Community Health Clinic, CM0 8DX

Uttlesford District

Gt Dunmow Rowena Davey Day Centre CM6 1EQ

Stansted Parish Office, CM24 8AQ

Coming soon: Saffron Walden, Thaxted and Finchingfield.

- Have your NHS hearing aid cleaned & re-tubed.
- Receive help and advice

This is a free service provided by Hearing Help Essex Volunteers and held in the districts of Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon, Uttlesford & Basildon. Appointments must be booked in advance either by visiting our website or contacting us by phone or email. Full contact details can be found on the front page of this newsletter.

Donations towards our work are gratefully received.



Registered Charity no. 1113498

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