



**AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER**

# What is ELFT Ability?

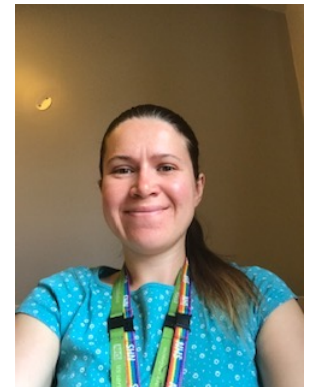
ELFT Ability is an open network that aims to bring together disabled (**ALTERED ABILITY**) staff and trainees along with our allies. Our membership includes staff with hidden disabilities as well as long-term health conditions or if you are simply interested in supporting those with disability in the workplace.



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# Hearing Loss and Computing Factsheets:

## 1. How can technology help?

- A wide variety of devices are available to help people manage their hearing loss. Innovations and new products are being released all the time, and the latest assistive technology is smart, easy to use and relatively inexpensive.
- It can help you to get the best from your hearing aids, enabling you to participate far more fully in leisure, work and study activities.

### Available equipment and services include:

#### ❖ text services

#### ❖ induction loops

#### ❖ assistive listening devices, including radio aids

- You can also use a computer, tablet or smartphone to enhance your communications in many ways – including sound alerts, captioning and text services.
- An increasing array of useful apps are now available to assist people with hearing loss, while video calls can be extremely helpful for lip-reading and signing.



## 2. What can employers do?

- Any adjustments required do not necessarily need to cost a lot of money.
- What may be reasonable will depend, in part, on the size and nature of the organisation.
- For staff with hearing loss, reasonable adjustments could include:
  - ❖ **installing relevant assistive technologies**
  - ❖ **making some changes to work organisation and the working environment**
  - ❖ **providing communications support – such as BSL interpreters, lip-speakers, electronic notetakers or speech-to-text reporters for meetings and training etc.**



## 3. Adjusting your computer, tablet or smartphone

There are some very simple ways that people with hearing loss can adjust the settings on their computer, tablet or smartphone to make it easier to use.

Potential options include:

- ❖ **changing the type of alerts so that you get a visual notification (such as the screen flashing) or a vibration when a sound is played**
- ❖ **turning on captions so that these are displayed in all apps that use them, such as video apps with subtitles**
- ❖ **connecting your hearing aid or cochlear implant directly to your device**
- ❖ **enabling phone noise cancellation (to reduce ambient background noise).**

#### 4. Next Generation Text Service

- ❑ Textphones are used by people who are unable to hear on a standard telephone.
- ❑ Users can either type or speak their part of the call and receive text back that they can read on the textphone's screen.
- ❑ The Next Generation Text Service (NGTS) introduced by BT is the new national text relay service.
- ❑ As well as working with conventional textphones, NGTS allows you to make calls via your computer, tablet or smartphone.
- ❑ By using the **NGT Lite** app, you can communicate with another person either directly (if they also have the app) or through a Relay Assistant who will speak or type your words through to the other person and text you their response.
- Visit [www.ngts.org.uk](http://www.ngts.org.uk) for more information.

#### Speech-to-text reporters and electronic note-takers

- Speech-to-text reporters (STTRs) help people with hearing loss to access spoken information via a laptop or computer / projection screen.
- STTRs use a special keyboard and system called Palantype or Stenograph to type words phonetically. This enables English translations to be provided in real time on your screen, and is most suitable for people who are capable of reading text quickly for long periods.
- Electronic note-takers also produce notes onto a laptop, but with the communications support specialist providing a live, comprehensive summary of what is being said rather than a verbatim account. They are most commonly used in education.



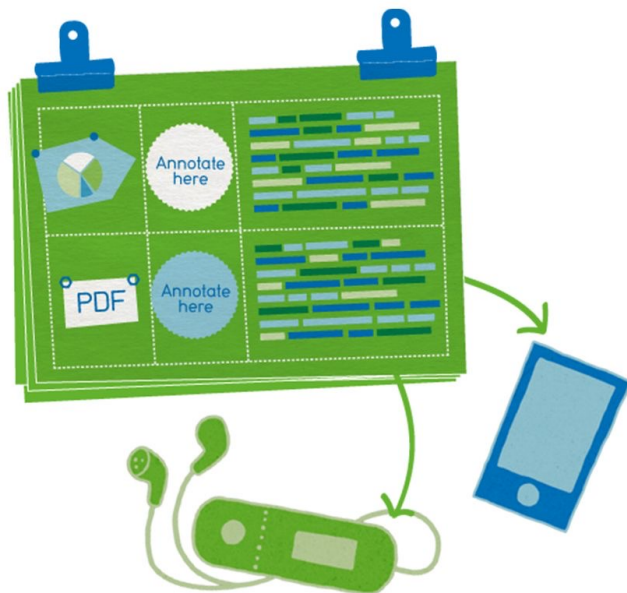
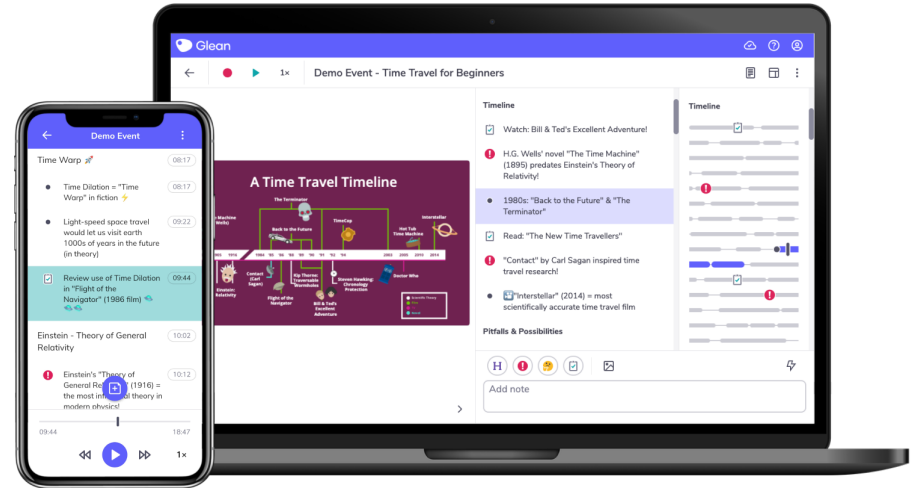
#### 5. Assistive listening devices

##### Radio aids

- ❖ Wireless radio aid systems offer a very effective way of improving the signal-to-noise ratio (and, therefore, speech intelligibility) for people with a hearing aid or cochlear implant.
  - They enhance your listening experience by delivering the sounds you want to hear directly to your hearing aid, unaffected by background noise and distance.
  - The user wears a very small, discreet receiver while a transmitter with a microphone is worn by the person speaking.
- ❖ The **Connevens fmGenie** is a very flexible, multichannel FM radio system that is widely used in the workplace, in schools and by university students.
  - It can easily be integrated with other equipment including TVs, computers, voice recorders and phones.
- ❖ The **Comfort Contego** is a similar portable system developed by Comfort Audio.
- ❖ The **Phonak Roger** is an easy to use digital system that also offers excellent speech quality - but without any need to change radio channels (to avoid possible interference).
  - Go to [www.connevens.co.uk/catalogue/102/fmGenie-Radio-Aid-Systems](http://www.connevens.co.uk/catalogue/102/fmGenie-Radio-Aid-Systems) for more information about the *fmGenie* system.
  - Go to [www.phonak.com/uk/en/hearing-aids/accessories/roger.html](http://www.phonak.com/uk/en/hearing-aids/accessories/roger.html) to find out more about the *Roger* system.
  - Go to [www.comfortaudio.com/](http://www.comfortaudio.com/) for details of the *Comfort Contego* and *DigiSystem*.

## Listening for TV and audio

- ❖ A wide range of infra-red and digital systems are available specifically to assist with listening to TV, radio and hi-fi.
- These include neckloop options for hearing aid wearers or stereo headsets for people who don't wear a hearing aid.
- ❖ A mains-powered transmitter base station is placed in a prominent position near the source.
- ❖ Most commonly this is connected directly (using SCART or audio connections) but it can also be operated with a wired microphone attached to the loudspeaker.
- The rechargeable wireless receiver worn by the listener is placed in the transmitter's charging cradle when not in use.



## Personal listening devices

- ❖ Personal listening devices are mobile phone or remote control sized products that help you to hear more clearly, whether you have a hearing aid or not.
- You point them in the direction you want to listen, and they amplify and transfer the sound direct to your hearing aid(s), or ears, via a variety of options (such as neckloops and headphones).
- ❖ Some devices have an omni-directional microphone which can help improve speech intelligibility in more difficult circumstances, such as meetings etc.
- Many assistive listening devices are equally suited for TV and audio listening and have different input options, enabling you to change between microphone, direct audio and loop pickup.

## 6. Useful software and apps

- The range of apps and specialist software designed to assist people with hearing loss (some of which utilise voice recognition) is expanding all the time.
- Many of these are available on different platforms, with potential options including:
  - ❖ **Skype** (now with a subtitle function) or **FaceTime** (for Mac OS and iOS only) for video calls,

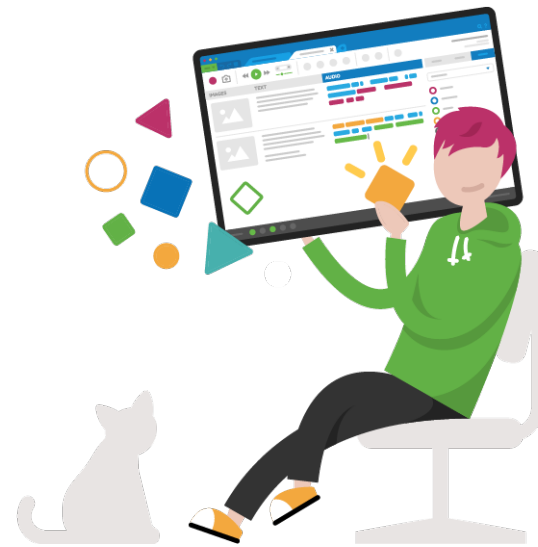
voice calls and instant messaging

- ❖ **Microsoft Translate** provides translated subtitles on any device. This can also be used to display subtitles on a PowerPoint presentation in any of the supported text languages

([translator.microsoft.com/](https://www.translator.microsoft.com/))

([translator.microsoft.com/help/presentation-translator/](https://www.translator.microsoft.com/help/presentation-translator/))

- ❖ **Google Live Transcribe** performs real-time transcription of speech to text on an Android device. This is currently still in Beta mode ([www.android.com/accessibility/live-transcribe/](https://www.android.com/accessibility/live-transcribe/))



- ❖ **Sonocent Audio Notetaker** for capturing live recordings (or imported audio) and converting these into accessible chunks of text for subsequent editing. Sonocent Recorder is a free companion app that works with this software on both Android and iOS.

- ❖ **Roger Voice** for captioning telephone calls and voice messages ([rogervoice.com/en/](https://rogervoice.com/en/))

- ❖ **Vox Sciences** for transcribing voicemails and delivering these to your mobile as a text

message or email ([www.voxsci.com/](https://www.voxsci.com/))

- ❖ **MobileSign** and **BSL Finger Spelling** for learning British Sign Language

- ❖ **InterpreterNow** - an instant video-relay service that allows deaf people to make a video call in sign language, with an interpreter voicing what the deaf person says in real time ([interpreternow.co.uk/](https://interpreternow.co.uk/))

- ❖ **Braci**, **OtoSense** and **TapTap** provide are sound recognition applications that provide visual and sensory alerts to draw attention to nearby sounds

- ❖ **TapSOS** is a non-verbal way to connect with the emergency services - launching soon ([www.tapsos.com/](https://www.tapsos.com/))



Microsoft  
Translator



## 7. Useful contacts

### ❖ Action on Hearing Loss

- Action on Hearing Loss (formerly the RNID) is a UK-wide charity providing practical support and advice for people with hearing loss and tinnitus. It also provides day-to-day care, communication services and training, as well as campaigning to change public policy around hearing loss issues and supporting research into an eventual cure. Visit [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/)

### British Deaf Association (BDA)

The BDA is a UK-wide membership organisation and registered charity run by Deaf people for Deaf people. It delivers a range of services to achieve its aims of empowering Deaf people to overcome difficulties that they face on a daily basis.

### Hearing Link

Hearing Link is a UK-wide charity for people with hearing loss, their families and friends. It aims to help people adjust to the practical and emotional challenges that hearing loss can bring – offering shared experiences, practical support and guidance.

### Specialist suppliers – contact details

Specialist suppliers of assistive technology for people with hearing loss include:

- The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (previously Action on Hearing Loss) - [rnid.org.uk](http://rnid.org.uk)
- Connevans - [www.connevans.co.uk/page/index](http://www.connevans.co.uk/page/index)
- Gordon Morris - [www.gordonmorris.co.uk](http://www.gordonmorris.co.uk)
- Hearing Link - [shop.hearinglink.org](http://shop.hearinglink.org)



## Opportunities to make difference:

### AbilityNet:

#### ❖ Disabled User Tester

- AbilityNet provides accessibility testing services for a wide range of customers, and we would like people, aged 18 and over with a disability, to join our network of User Testers.
- While such work may be infrequent, if your application matches with the requirements of our clients, you will be getting paid to help make the world a more accessible place.

❑ **Position:** Digital Accessibility Services:  
Disabled User Tester

❑ **Location:** London and remote (we can accept applications from anywhere in the UK)

❑ **Employment Status:** Self-employed (please note: consistent work is not guaranteed)

❖ Follow this link to apply:

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/careers/disabled-user-tester>



## Health and Wellbeing Resources for NHS staff

### ❖ Staff Wellbeing, Benefits & Discounts:

Email - [elft.employee.engage@nhs.net](mailto:elft.employee.engage@nhs.net)

### ❖ Our NHS People:

Visit - <https://people.nhs.uk/>



# Past events:

## JUNE 2021

- ❑ 28.6.21 - Impact and Benefits of Working with New Technology

## AUGUST 2021

- ❑ 05.8.21 - Disabilities in Mental Health in the South Asian Community
- ❑ 13.08.21 - Adjustments Session

# Future events:

## SEPTEMBER 2021

- ❑ ELFT Ability seminar: Dyspraxia

## OCTOBER 2021

- ❑ ELFT Ability round table discussion Impact of mental health
- ❑ ELFT Ability focus group session Interviews/recruitment

## AUGUST 2021

- ❑ ELFT Ability conference 3<sup>rd</sup> December





### Facebook

- ELFT Ability has a closed Facebook group exclusively for disabled staff and those with health conditions to come together for peer support.
- You can find us on Facebook by searching for “ELFT Ability” or join by contacting Laura Pisaneschi for more information.



### Twitter

- ELFT Ability are very active on Twitter, raising awareness of disability and employment issues and much much more.
- Join us for the conversation at @ELFTAbility.



### Microsoft Teams

- If you are not a member of the ELFT Ability team network and would like to join please contact:
- [elft.ability@nhs.net](mailto:elft.ability@nhs.net)



- If you have any queries, suggestions or news for ELFT Ability please contact:
- [elft.ability@nhs.net](mailto:elft.ability@nhs.net)