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Let's Loop Initiative

March 2012

Hearing Link is working with partners to educate service providers in the importance of loop facilities for people who use hearing aids, and to encourage them to revamp the systems they have in place.

The first step is to encourage Eastbourne (where Hearing Link's head office is based) to become a Looped Town of Excellence. It will then serve as an example to other towns and cities around the UK.

The initiative got off to a good start with a meeting in early March, which included major retailers such as Asda, the Post Office, HSBC and Lloyds Pharmacy. It was also supported by the Borough Council and local disability groups.

[Read all about it - In the Eastbourne Herald](#)

[More about our loop campaign](#)

[Third International Loop Conference in 2013](#)

[Get involved?](#)

Advice about loops for shops, banks, places of worship, Councils and other service providers

Why should I provide a loop system for my service users?

Not only are you required to by law, it is also good customer practice. If you make your goods and services accessible to hearing aid wearers you are likely to provide a better service to your customers and provide your business with an additional revenue stream.

What type of system would I need?

Loop systems

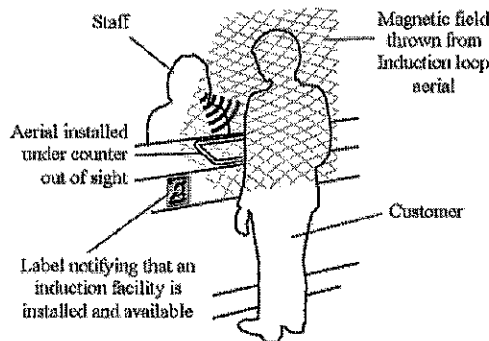
All you need to know about loop systems

The Hearing Loop System is a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids. The loop system provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.

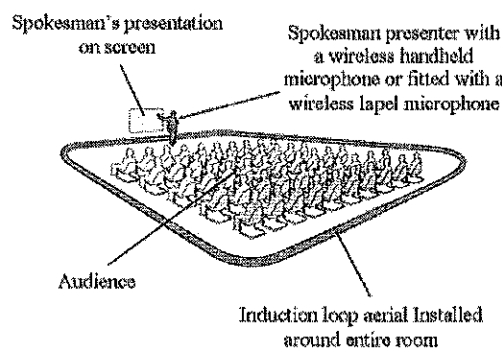
The loop system consists of a microphone to pick up the spoken word; an amplifier which processes the signal which is then sent through the final piece; the loop cable, a wire placed around the perimeter of a specific area i.e. a meeting room, a church, a service counter etc to act as an antenna that radiates the magnetic signal to the hearing aid.

Click on this link to see a loop system in action <http://www.contacts.co.uk/how-contacts-induction-loops-work>

Take a look at this diagram of a counter loop (e.g. in a bank, shop etc):



Below is a diagram of a room loop (e.g. at an event, place of worship etc):



What are the advantages/disadvantages of using a loop?

Advantages

- Cuts out unwanted background noise
- No need to use a receiver/headset
- Sound goes directly into the hearing aid
- Can be used by anyone with a compatible hearing aid
- It is inconspicuous
- Cost effective
- Any number of users can use the system

Disadvantages

- Can pick up interference from other magnetic fields
- Can only be used with compatible hearing aids
- In some situations a loop may not be secure, other hearing aid wearers can listen in

Frequently asked questions

There are various systems for different applications; service counter loops are different from meeting room loops. It is important that you find an induction loop specialist who will provide you with the correct equipment.

What is the likely cost and is the installation expensive/disruptive?

A service counter loop will cost around £150-£200 installed, room loops will be more expensive depending on the size of the room. Loop system installation is normally undistruptive.

Where can I obtain a loop system?

You should obtain your loop from a specialist induction loop supplier.

Am I under legal obligation to offer this?

Yes, the Equality Act legislation requires service providers to make reasonable adjustments, providing the appropriate induction loop equipment is deemed to be making reasonable adjustments.

How do I ensure my staff can operate the system?

Your specialist induction loop provider should be able to assist with this.

Does a loop system need regular maintenance?

Yes, normally an annual visit will provide the appropriate level of maintenance support.

How do I promote accessibility of my service, and demonstrate I have installed a loop?

Fitting the correct signage is very important, also advertising the fact that you are providing the service for example on your website.



Thanks to Contacta for supplying the information on this page.

How do I know if my hearing aids are compatible?

If your hearing aid has an obvious "T" setting on the programme switch then this is typically for selection of the loop function. With many hearing aids nowadays, there is no way of knowing by looking as to what programme options your hearing aid has – so ask your audiologist.

What if I use a cochlear implant, can I use a loop?

This will depend upon the model of processor you wear – again, ask the cochlear implant team and they can tell you the specific features for your implant.

I have no hearing aids, can I use a loop

The only way to use a loop without hearing aids is by using a loop listening device or something similar.

How do I get a loop for my home, and how do I select the right one?

If you are purchasing a loop system, suppliers will typically advise you of the right model for the size of the room you will be using it in. There are a variety of types and price, so your personal requirements will influence the type and price of loop system you will need.

Will social services provide a loop system free?

In some areas of the UK, loop systems may be provided free or subsidised by Social Services or Sensory Impairment Teams; you may need to be assessed before this is provided to you via this route. If you are unsure what the local provision is in your area then speak to your audiologist – they often know the system and may even refer you.

Where can I expect to use loop systems in my community?

Almost everywhere, Church's, Theatres, Council offices, Hospitals, shops, Banks etc should all have induction loop provision.

How will I know if a loop system is provided in my local community venues?

There should be an induction loop sign indicating that a loop system is available.

What do I do if I cannot seem to hear using the loop system provided?

If you cannot hear anything from the loop system provided you should inform a member of staff who will then get the loop system checked out. If the service provider does not provide the appropriate equipment or they do not keep it maintained properly they could be in breach of the Equality Act and be open to legal action.

Hearing Link are working with partner organisations to make sure that the loop system is available and working in a wide variety of environments. But if there's no loop setting on your hearing aid, it won't help you. So why might the loop function not be on your aid, and what can you do about it? [Audiologist Adam Beckman explains.](#)

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