



building deaf friendly communities

**Hearing Loops:
Basics for Business**



A guide to Infrared Hearing Systems

Hearing Loops: Basics for Business

signal.org.uk

Infrared Hearing Systems



Why do we need a Hearing Loop System?

The Equality Act 2010 states that organisations have a “duty to make reasonable adjustments” which, for people with hearing loss would mean the “provision of an auxiliary aid.”

The auxiliary aid here would be a hearing loop system. Think of it as the equivalent of ramp or lift access for somebody who uses a wheelchair.

Benefits of a Working Hearing Loop System

- Repeat Customers
- Attract a large group of people who often feel unable to shop outside of their comfort zone (don't forget, nearly a quarter of Shropshire's population have hearing loss).
- The person does not have to reveal they have hearing loss if they do not want to, giving them confidence and lessening anxiety of the shopper.

Infrared Hearing Systems

How do they work?

An alternative to the induction loops that do not use a magnetic field but instead a receiver and headset.

Pros

- It can be set up for any hearing loss, including those without hearing aids
- No overspill into other rooms.

Cons

- Extra equipment is required (headsets) so the person with a hearing aid has to ensure they arrange the visit in advance (so headsets are charged).
- The person has to be in a very specific place in front of the infrared, and simple movements such as turning their head can break the connection.
- It is less reliable.

Video

What is a Hearing Loop and how does it work?

youtube.com/watch?v=hlnx3ZImTw0



Top Hearing Loop Tips

- Assign a member of staff, for example a senior receptionist, to be responsible for the hearing loop system so that other staff members know where to report faults.
- When there is a fault that the assigned member of staff cannot find you can go to a local handyman, electrician or sound technician and ask them if they have any knowledge of hearing loop installation or maintenance. A list of known suppliers is also attached.
- Ensure a “Hearing Loop” sign is visible in the area the hearing loop can be used.
- Ensure the system is charged and ready for use, and get it checked by an electrician or sound technician or handyman annually.
- Be aware! Tell staff where the hearing loop works in the building, where it doesn't and why (e.g. when the infrared line might be broken).
- Explain the system to customers, why they have to sit in certain areas of the building, how the infrared must not be broken to maintain the loop and that it might drop out when they turn their heads away (as the streamer doesn't meet the infrared).



General Communication Tips

Hearing Loops are best used alongside good communication tactics.

Placing this poster in a public area, where staff can see it, helps to remind people how best to communicate effectively with people with hearing loss, but are also good tips for positive customer services.

