Transcript for ‘Top tips for how tech can help with hearing loss’ webinar

**ANNIE:**

Hello, everyone and welcome to today's Webinar.

Hello everyone.

Welcome to today's webinar.

It is just gone 1 o'clock

So, I'm just going to give everyone a chance to join

Do feel free to drop into the Q&A box to say hi.

We've disabled the chat feature, as we've discovered it can cause problems for some people.

but the Q&A option is still

live.

So, I can see the numbers jumping up lots of participants joining us today.

I can see the numbers jumping up.

Glad you could make it.

Lots of participants joining us today.

Just gave it a few more moments

I'll just leave it a few more moments.

Ok, I can see a few more of you have joint us now.

So, we'll make a start.

So, hello everyone.

Welcome to how tech can help with hearing loss.

I'm Annie Mannion from AbilityNet and I'm Digital Marketing Manager, and I'll be running you through today's session.

So just to

go through housekeeping we're joined today from Rachel from sign solutions

and she'll be providing live British sign, language translation, for you, today

You can increase the view of the panel, including the BSL interpreter, by sliding the panel Bar, that's on the Right, and this can only be done on desktops and laptops, though and not on Mobile, Phone, so for the best view of BSL and if you can join on your

This can only be done on desktops and laptops, not mobile phones so for

the best view you can join on your desktop or laptop.

We have live captions provided by MyClearText.

You can turn them on using the CC option on the control panel at

additional captions are available via streamtext.net/player?=AbilityNet.

And we'll be putting that in the Q&A as well.

Slides are available at SlideShare dot net/AbilityNet and also on our

website abilitynet.org.uk/webinar-hearingloss.

and then if you have any Technical Issues, or you need to leave early Don't Worry, you'll receive an email in couple of days’ time with the recording.

the transcript and the slides, and then depending on how you join the Webinar, and You'll find the Q, a Window, so please do Drop, Any Questions in there for the Panel, to Address and if we don't manage to get through your

questions during the live session we'll be looking at questions after the

session on our website

at the same address, Webinar,

Webinar-hearing loss

And finally, we also have a feedback survey. You'll be directly to at the end which invites you to tell us about any future topics.

You'd like us to cover. so please do complete that if you're able.

So, for those of you who aren't yet familiar with AbilityNet’s, we Support people of any age living with any disability or impairment, to use technology to achieve their goals, at home at work, and in education, and we do this by Providing specialist advice, Services, digital Accessibility, testing Training.

we also offer workplace inclusion consultancy and free information resources like thiswebinar so I'll share a little bit more about our services at the end of the

webinar.

So today we're going to learn from Matthew Johnston who is Global Head of

Disability, Inclusion, at thought works and a digital accessibility advocates.

disability inclusion at ThoughtWorks and a digital accessibility advocate.

And he's. Also. He spent his career so far in the tech industry.

He is also spent his career so far in the tech industry.

Matthew was born deaf, and he's also a Trustee of Stage Text and Scope

and we also welcome James Watson O’Neill, who joined the Deaf Health Charity Sign Health ss Chief Executive in 2016, and he's worked in the Charity sector since 2001 including at Scope, and the NSPCC and he was awarded an OBE for services to deaf people in the queens honours list this year.

We are also joined by Iain Wilson, co-ordinator for Warwickshire tech volunteers.

Deaf people in the Queen's New Years, on his list at this year, and then we're also joined by Iain Wilson who is AbilityNet’s County Coordinator for Warwickshire Tech Volunteers and He's Lived, Experience of Hearing Loss and later on Will Share Information

Stuart Goldberg is AbiltyNet’s, county Coordinator for Hertfordshire to Tech Volunteers, and he's now retired but he's had a Varied it career, Spanning 40 years, and he has a Hearing Impairment and Uses, Technology, where

He has now retired but had a varied career in IT for a number of years.

He uses tech to mitigate his hearing loss.

Just before we start our content, I'm going to start with a poll to find out who is joining us today, so I'll launch the poll now.

So, can you tell us do you currently experience some level of hearing loss?

So, the answers are yes, I am d/Deaf.

Yes, I have severe hearing loss, yes, I have some hearing loss, or no.

So, I'll just leave that a few moments for everybody to answer.

Yes, I have severe hearing loss. Yes, I have some hearing loss, or no, so I'll just leaves that a few moments for everybody to answer, depending on how you joined the webinar you may find you can't see the poll, but you can respond in the Q.

Depending on how you joined the webinar you may find you can't see the poll

But you can respond in the Q&A panel.

So just even a few more moments.

I'll just leave it a few more moments.

Okay, I think most people have answered nearly So I'm going to end.

O, I think most people have answered, nearly.

I'm going to end the poll now and share the results.

So, the majority of people on the webinar, 62% have not, do not

currently experience some level of hearing loss.

The next answer is yes, I have sop hearing loss with 28%, then we have

The poll. Now and share the results. So, the majority of people, on the Webinar and 62% have not current do not currently experience, some level of hearing, loss, the next, answer is yes, I, have some hearing Loss with 28%, then we have yes, I have severe Hearing loss.

yes, I have severe hearing loss at 6% and then 4% of you say you are deaf,

At 6%. And then 4% of you and say your death, lowercase, D, or Uppercase d.

lower case or upper-case D.

So, thank you, and it's just useful to gauge

Thank you, it is just useful to gauge the experience of people joining us

The experience of people joining us today, for the discussion

today for the discussion.

Now I'd like to introduce 2 of our AbilityNet volunteer co-ordinators

that I mentioned earlier so welcome Iain Wilson and Stuart Goldberg.

so just like to ask you to Explain Briefly a little bit about what you do at AbilityNet as Tech, Volunteers, who would like

I'll I'd like to ask you to explain a little about what you do at

to go first

A AbilityNet as tech volunteers.

Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, please please go ahead.

Who would like to go first.

Iain, please go ahead.

**IAIN:** Hi everyone.

My name is Iain Wilson.

As Annie said' I'm the county co-ordinator for Warwickshire and with

the West Midlands.

So, what that means is we’re a volunteer group.

We have about 330 volunteers across the country and effectively any

inquiry that comes in for Warwickshire or for the West Midlands will come to

me as the County, Coordinator and then

I'll distribute that to the volunteers.

It means I have about 10 volunteers throughout Warwickshire and the West

Midlands and depending on location or technology I'll distribute the ticket

to them and what we offer is initially phone call but then a home visit, to people, that you know, require it and all our volunteers are DBS checked, and have

technology experience

So, we can typically you know, go in make one or more visits to a to client, who has a technology issue, and help them solve it.

So that's basically, what I what I do for AbilityNet

so, I'll handover to Stuart.

**ANNIE:** Thank you.

**STUART**: Thank you Iain.

No, thank you

Well, I'm the co-ordinator for Hertfordshire and essentially, I do

what Iain does except I do it in Hertfordshire as opposed to Warwickshire.

What in? Does. Except I didn't help for sure, as opposed to work share and well, that's it.

we've got a team of about 8 volunteers, covering the county.

And whatever Iain says is what we too.

If an inquiry comes from someone living in Hertfordshire it will come

me and I’ll pass it on to

one of our volunteers there.

**ANNIE:** Ok, fantastic.

Okay, yep. Fantastic. I know I you both do an amazing job.

I just wanted to pose a question to both of you really, could you share some information, about the tech adjustments, or assistive technology that we can

advise those with hearing loss to consider?

**IAIN:** I'll go first.

I know Stuart has some additional ones that I work with, so I have some

Once the ones that I work with. So, I have some mild hearing loss myself.

It's not acute, but I do use hearing aids, and

they are connected through Bluetooth to my phone

So, you know, I have some ability on the phone to use the phones microphone or to you know, increase the volume in the Hearing through the phone and then you know, I really like things, like Google Maps, if I'm walking through London or Anywhere Else, the Directions,

just come direct through my

Through to my hearing a very nice thing to walk along, and it says turn left to right.

I also use closed captions

No, not all the time, but yeah, particularly if I've been on lots of calls do during the day so post Captions neither zoom or teams, and so I'm, very, very, happy to take our clients, through that and they find, it quite

Helpful because It's not always obvious on

Teams or zoom how to use the captions.

so, you know that's the thing I've always worked with there are sort of you know accessibility, options on the various devices.

So, whether it's its windows, or Android, or Google Apple.

You know there's always, some standard, functions but if that's not you know.

Good enough, then, you know there are some other options we can.

enough then there are some other options we can go to.

So, I'll handover to Stuart because I know he uses some additional functions

other than ones I've described so.

**STUART:** Ok, thank you Iain.

I've got quite severe hearing loss,

If I'm not wearing hearing aids, I'm fairly deaf.

Like Iain, I have Bluetooth enabled hearing aids which streams directly from my iPhone.

So, for me it is easier for someone to ring me on my mobile rather than on

the landline for that reason.

The other thing I've got a device that came with this particular brand

of hearing aids called Multi Mic which streams directly to the hearing aids.

It can be used as a microphone to amplify people's voices.

I can also plug it into the headphone socket on my TV or computer and

that feeds through my hearing aids and that is what I'm using at the moment.

I've got the device plugged into my computers, headphone, Socket,

There is an iPhone app called Hearing Helper which is free on the Apple app

store and it converts speech to text.

It is not bad actually.

Don't use it very often

but quite often you can use it and some that and it will help you understand better

what the person is saying.

Like Iain, I use closed captions if they are available.

One thing I would caution is you have got some apps

give you automatically generated captions.

generated captions, like YouTube.

Like, YouTube, and they're not necessarily a 100% accurate.

so, you need to, if

you haven't got any hearing at all, then, and you need to be a bit cautious about what it's saying.

The final thing

I'd like to say, is on the AbilityNet website dot org dot Uk,

there are a number of fact sheets.

One I would recommend anyone with hearing loss downloading is hearing

loss and computing because among other things it has a load of software apps,

Relevant apps and equipment that might be of Use and I would.

Say,

I would say the, what I use and what Iain uses is iPhone related,

But there are the equivalence of both the Hardware, and software, available for Android, is out there, and you know, just got to look for it.

Okay. Thank you

**ANNIE:**

Okay, fantastic. Thank you. Both. So much, for you know all the valuable

Work you do with the AbilityNet and all the other volunteers around the country as well, and some of you who, I'm sure watching the Webinar today, and then We'll put the Hearing Loss Fact Sheet link into the Q&A and also on to the Recording page,

we'll share with everybody after the webinar as well.

So, thank you we'll come back into the panel discussion in in a minute.

But I just wanted to say a little bit about the AbilityNet tech volunteer opportunities.

So as Iain and Stewart mentioned it's a varied role, and often very rewarding we've got a Uk, wide network of 300 Tech Volunteers, so you know, you may be helping to

to set up a new device, connect to the internet, solve a problem with a

With the computer, virus or support somebody to connect with family and friends, online,

And then we also offer training Opportunities and social Events, for volunteers.

As well, I think some of our volunteers have been with us for more than 10 years.

And win awards for various work, that they do, and so we just got a slide.

That's just to share a couple of the positive comments that we've received.

just to share a couple of the positive comments we've received.

So, I get, lots of support from AbilityNet staff, and from the excellent

website.

I always feel valued when I'm working, I never feel judged when I'm not.

It’s a Welcoming, Supporting Environment, Excellent training, and totally rewarding.

And then I've got another example related to hearing loss in particular about our volunteer, Angela, who is very helpful well, spoke clearly which is excellent for my hearing loss, and she Shared her Knowledge of Computing and Angela was brilliant, good at what she does and had no Worries About her coming to my house. I can't fault anything she did or what I learnt about my devices.

So, a shout out to say we're always looking for more volunteers in the UK

and we're in particular need of support in Sussex, London Manchester East Yorkshire Edinburgh Wales so really around the country if it is something that is something that you

are interested in doing, or you are inspired to help, it could be the

perfect new year’s resolution so we look forward to hearing from the you.

And it's /volunteer on the AbilityNet website.

And so now I have a few questions to address to all of our Panel, and then, after these questions, we'll take any questions that come through and from your watching as attendees on the Q&A.

Just to start with, question 1, so we've had hearing loss makes me feel

exhausted is a common comment that we've learned so things like guessing

words and filling in the blanks.

following conversations with Missing words so with that in mind are their particular apps or assistive technologies you can suggest that could help.

If I could bring in Matthew too answer the question first, if that's

all right.

**MATTHEW:** Yes sure.

Can you hear me ok, by the way?

Good.

So just to let you I know am deaf.

Born deaf and I've always worn hearing aids through my life.

Until about 10 years ago I wear a cochlear implant.

Now some of you may already know what a cochlear implant is but for those

who don't, it is a similar processor, like in a hearing aid except they

drill a hole behind my ear to put a wire.

The wire goes inside the cochlear and there are 16 electrodes, so each electrode contains a block or frequency.

It is not perfect, but it improves my hearing by 50% which is remarkable.

So, it gives me more confidence and I'm able to hear more sound.

The first one which was really unusual was the squeaking trolley in

the supermarket.

I thought that was fascinating!

Anyway, so what tech do I need to help me, so I use lots and lots of tech.

I'm a techie so I try them out. So, I have a cochlear implant which improves my listening by 50%.

Not saying everybody should have one.

You should speak to a specialist.

There are several cochlear implant centres in the UK, you could have a conversation with them, and it is all funded by the National Health Service.

It may not suit everybody.

Just be aware.

Secondly you could have a Bluetooth, so my cochlear implant is Bluetooth

enabled so I connect many of my Bluetooth enabled devices like laptop, the phone, television to Bluetooth.

so that give me more clarity of the voice and that’s fantastic.

I do rely

on captions and I get very tired, so I try and limit the number of meeting calls a

You know I'm like a battery.

The more meetings I have the faster the battery runs out. So, you need to help yourself, take care of yourself and say sorry, I've got so many meetings I'm going to stop.

Or, you know, you help yourself, set yourself a number of meetings.

I also have 2 types of captions.

One is captions that are provided by the human captioner, for example, that we have right now.

I also have the auto captions which is not always accurate, but it is faster.

So, I have both and having both helps me enormously.

Yeah, these are the tech that I use every day.

You can download, on your phone, you, if you don't, I mean, I have a Google, phone.

I have a Google phone which provide, real time, captioning.

but not everybody has a Google phone, a pixel

If you have an Android, or a Microsoft or Apple, you can download an app called Live Transcribe from Apple or Google. And you can use that to help you to translate when you go shopping or other places, if you go to a hospital or to your GP, it doesn't work, very well, when you have a noisy background because it is unable to detect the

speech really well. Also, it depends on the microphone of the phone.

Have I answered your question.

**ANNIE:** Yeah, loads of fantastic suggestions. Yeah, really great ideas.

And I'm Sure very useful for people to take away. James, can I bring you in now if you

you've got particular thoughts on the question

**JAMES:** Sure, thanks Annie and thanks for the chance to be with you today.

It is great to be taking part in an event that is so accessible and congratulations to AbilityNet for making that happen.

I think having the BSL interpreter Rachel with us today and also having Kate who's providing those super accurate captions for us, is not something we always see in online events. So, congratulations to you, for making sure that happens.

So, I work at SignHealth with the deaf people's Health Charity.

We focus particularly on deaf people who use British Sign Language to communicate.

But that's a more and more blurred boundary than ever really.

And I think some of your what your poll was asking people to kind of identify different ways, and I think that's a really interesting question.

I identify as deaf; I think probably on an audio gram I have probably slightly more

hearing than Matthew and maybe some similar hearing to Stuart or Iain but

some of it is about identity and how you choose to describe yourself.

And increasingly, we see a Conversation about whether the

division between Capital D deaf and lower d deaf is a helpful division, or whether, in fact, we should be more inclusive, and so on.

So, it's good to see the language evolving.

What we know as deaf people is we do face additional barriers when it comes to accessing information.

And so yes, like Matthew and Iain and Stuart, I use technology in my life, I'm connected to my audio in this meeting through my computer with Roger. Roger On device made by Phonak, which Links to my Hearing Aids, and I'm using captions, as well, but the Question is Interesting because of course your original Question was quote hearing loss makes me exhausted and that is a common comment.

And I think that is really true.

I'm lucky enough to work almost all the time with deaf people, and we have a very kind of strong human rights empowered approach to being deaf and I want to kind of re redirect the sentence, and say It's not, it's not me, being deaf that makes me exhausted.

It's Hearing people's inability to make information accessible that exhausts me. So, I'm lucky to have lots of meetings with British sign language so I don't need to hear as I’m communicating in sign language with my colleagues, or I mean events like this which are really accessible, and they're much easier to participate in. It's when I’m in an environment which is much less accessible than it becomes exhausting but not about me being deaf.

So that is an important distinction, and it is one that deaf people don't subconsciously

use.

But we know in our charity, for example, we provide psychological therapy for deaf people directly in sign language. We have a contract with NHS England to do that and we know that deaf people are twice as likely to experience mental health difficulties as hearing people.

There's really good research that backs up that information, and that and that's, obvious from our life experience it's it can be a very isolating experience and lead to lots of mental

health issues at different times of life or losing your hearing depending on your experience of Becoming Deaf, or losing your Hearing whatever language, you want to use so it is important I think for us to be aware of the risk of isolation and Loneliness, and poor mental Health and think about the

impact and that might be different when it comes to

thinking about deaf children at school, to deaf people in the workplace,

through to older deaf people who perhaps are a bit more isolated or living

in a hearing nursing home whatever it, might be so lots and lots of things, to think about and We're.

here to help as much as we can. As a charity.

We provide lots of Health, information, particularly for sign language users.

But really interested in taking part in events like this, too, so very grateful for the chance to participate thank you

**ANNIE:** Glad you could join us.

It is a really good valid points you are making and yeah, we completely

agree.

Stuart and Iain, I know you've mentioned a few, tech solutions that you you'd suggest.

.

But is there anything else that you'd like to add for this question, or We could move on to the next one depending on anything you'd like to add

**STUART:** The only thing I would say is

There, anything I would say, is technology I use is very helpful.

That says I can hear better on my iPhone than I can when someone rings me on the land line.

But there is, it is not perfect, and I doubt, because sound is a very

peculiar thing in my view.

quite complicated and I think we've, yet to get to the point where we get perfect. Technology.

and even so if I have a conversation with most people,

either phone or face-to-face there will be times when I say, sorry, can you

repeat that please.

and I'm sure my colleagues have found that wearing a Mask, because we often do.

Over the last few years. Yeah, there's a real menace to someone who's hard of Hearing,

I mean we're really fortunate today. all the other speakers I've been able to

hear so far very clearly, tribute to you, and that is not always the case

with the man or woman in the street so we just have to accept that technology

is good it helps a heck of a lot, but it is not perfect.

**ANNIE:** Yeah, good point.

**IAIN:** Just a couple from me Annie.

So, I think, yeah, it's interesting hearing James talk about sort of isolation, and Loneliness.

I think as AbilityNet volunteers, sometimes I think it's 50% fixing the technology, and 50%.

listening.

just having a tea, or a coffee, you know, with our with our client and just you know just on the chat.

so, it is quite often as I say, 50% around the technology and 50% around

the person.

The other thing I just wanted to mention is we do a lot of Teams and

Zoom Meetings and there, were just a few things, that were passed on to me, that might be

might be helpful.

You know.

If you're, you're hearing is good.

Just be aware of people on the caller who's hearing is maybe not as good.

and may be using lipreading so we talk about plain dark

clothing, having the light on your face, the background, being very plain.

clothing, having a light on your face, the background being very plain,

Sometimes, you know blurred, in that I know I did

see a comment from someone on the call

was struggling with a blurred background so it just depends on the

technology being used so be open and talk about what works

for people.

Speak slowly and clearly, raise the electronic hand to speak rather than

interrupting because that really throws people with hearing loss if just

another voice comes on so just little things like that.

Will really help during these meetings where maybe you have people

who have hearing loss and people who have regular hearing,

so just a couple of things to remember there

**ANNIE:** Yeah, excellent tips.

Thank you everybody.

So, we've got 2 more questions as part of the Panel, so Louise, thank you.

.

So, in the UK more than 40% of people over 50 years old have hearing loss.

This is according to RNID.

Rising to more than70% of people over the age of 70.

but some people may not want to admit they have

trouble hearing despite the potential risks that this may pose.

so not Hearing, the Doorbell or Alarms.

or maybe understanding medical

information correctly so can you provide some suggestions about what

what advice, and technology, might, help?

So, if I could bring in James to start with

**JAMES:** Sure.

And I think what is helpful about question is it reminds us that

people's experience of being deaf, losing their hearing,

whatever language you want to use it, is really different and I'm actually aware today that we're not

a particularly diverse panel of people and I think it is important to

remember that one's experience of Big deaf is kind of inextricable from one's life experience. In many other ways.

So, if you are a black person, a person of colour.

If you a are a trans person, if you have, are a disabled person with other

So, if you are a black, person, a person of colour, if you are a trans person with other impairments, all of those things, are going to interact with your identity, as a deficit in a different way, and so I think it, is important

that we meet people were

that we try to meet people where they are and understand it, with individuals, and think about their combined intersectional Experience of Difference,

and the question you pose about different

percentages of people losing hearing at different stages of life.

It is true that many older people lose their

hearing.

I Think, the data, shows that around the Age, of 75, the Likelihood, of your Hearing, Reducing quite

drastically is quite significant but it depends on what you spent the 75 years of

your life doing up to that point as to

whether or not how you will you know Cope with or engage with that experience. one of the Advantages of Wearing hearing Aids as

a younger person

although I'm not that young.

I'm in my mid-forties, is that by the time I'm 75, and my hearing probably will be even worse.

I have lots of experience of

hearing Aids and so my own journey through that will be very different to somebody who's encountering that for the very first time so it's really important I think for us to think of people as individuals and recognize their life experience I think when it

Comes to support. There are. There are lots and lots and lots of really fantastic Deaf organizations out there who have really ready and willing to help.

so, it is great you

are using statistics from RNID.

Fantastic charity.

Well known to lots of people on the call today and there is a lot of

of resources and support on RNID's Website which are only getting better They're Investing a lot

in their digital resources and

which is great to see

organisations like Royal Association for deaf people run a service called

Talk More which supports people around mental health, particularly at connecting people who are perhaps struggling with isolation.

The organisation Hearing Dogs which includes Hearing Link provides lots

and lots of great information and they can sell you technology,

, they can connect you through their linkup, clubs to other people, perhaps Experiencing hearing loss,

at the same stage of life.

One thing we've learned about mental health and the impact of deafness

is it's good to talk, it's good to tell Someone how you're feeling and it's good.

To talk to someone else who might have a slightly similar experience.

Not necessarily the same but something similar.

So, using technology, like the technology we've been discussing today, to connect you, don't have to be in the same place.

you might join an online

event to meet some people and try to keep up as well with the changes in

technology.

I'm part of lots of Facebook groups.

I'm sure other colleagues on the call are too, around deafness and I

recently how to use my iPhone to get live captioning which has not been

on the iPhone for a long time

Although it's been on Google, Pixel and Android, but It's recently come in beta to the iPhone.

You have to change your language to the us version of English weirdly in order for it to work.

But I can now get live Captions. For a phone call which had never been able to get before on an iPhone.

So, and I got all of that from a Facebook, group. So, I would really encourage people.

To look at social media. For these very specific groups of people that that's social media is at its best and we post, a lot on our social media channels, but we are also.

Try really hard to re-share information from other charities, and because we're stronger together and amplify each other's work, I think.

**ANNIE:**

Yeah, yeah, completely agree. And that we'll try and gather up as many resources as we can, and again share them on the webinar recording page.

Stuart, I know you have some things to mention in response to this question

that we discussed a while back regarding the system that you use for your doorbell and the alarms.

**STUART:**

Yeah, I've got a system installed, which got a vibrator, which I can put on my belt.

and when someone

rings our doorbell or our landline it will vibrate, and a little light will

show up telling me whether it is the phone or doorbell.

we've also got a Smoke Alarm which will link to it as well, so that's quite

handy.

The vibrator, when I'm not wearing it sits in a little holder which I keep by my bed, and that recharges it, rechargeable battery and it's also got a device, which I put under the pillow so if someone Rings the phone

, calls on the phone while I'm in bed, I get a vibration.

My pillow will vibrate so I know it is there.

Most of our phones have lights on them so if I can't hear the phone I

Then I can at least see that it's lit up and it's ringing.

which helps with the that as well.

The other thing I've got is on the alarm clock is another vibrator which

I can put under the pillow and that is quite handy because normally having

an alarm clock for an early morning call then I will not be awake, so it is very

handy for that.

Thank you.

**ANNIE:** Great, thank you.

Iain, did you have anything you would like to add in response to the

question?

**IAIN:** Yes, just been let down by technology.

My mouse has stopped working so that took a while to get off of the mute, I think on the

On the question of recognising hearing loss, one of the things I used

You know one of the things I used to be accused of going into a crowded environment was switching off and not being part of the conversation.

Subsequently I've learnt that there is a physiological reason for that.

Your brain literally switches off if it is struggling to hear and

then you know to interpret what is hearing.

interpret what it is hearing, it will literally shut down and stop that to

give you a break and then you can catch up again.

so, whereas I you know, wasn't sure if it was just me being anti-social, or not there is actually you know that that was one of the

things that led me to get my hearing

checked so if anyone on the call doesn't think they suffer from hearing

loss, that is maybe

something just to watch out for symptoms, if you like that it's beginning to affect your life, and time, to have it checked.

**ANNIE:** Good advice.

Thank you.

Matthew?

**MATTHEW**: I don't have anything to add after what Stuart said.

The internet, there are lots of devices that you connect to your vibrator, or you can have a vibrating watch, there are so many tech out there that connect to the fire alarm, doorbell and so on...

All you need to do to is a bit of Google and decide what is best for you.

I hope you don't mind but I noticed on the Q&A, I can give you an answer for two of the questions.

There was one about Bluetooth devices, one says can you connect to more than one at a time.

No, you can't, not with hearing aids. You can only connect to one Bluetooth

Device at a time it's a Bit of a pain.

But you have to disconnect if you want to switch to another device.

And also, someone said about universities, if you want to hear the lecture you can give them what we call a microphone.

Called a Roger microphone. And that is a Bluetooth enabled microphone so if

you have a Bluetooth enabled hearing aid or cochlear implant you

give the roger microphone to the lecturer or the person talking and you'd be you get a lot of clarity.

**ANNIE:** Great advice if you are a

student or work in universities please pass that on.

So, one, more question for you, before we have,

I can see there is tons of questions that come through from attendees.

so, one of our focuses at AbilityNet in 2023 will be how the NHS can be more accessible.

So, with this in mind, do you have any suggestions about how hospital staff,

GPS, any NHS, Employees, can use tech to communicate, with patients who are deaf

or have hearing loss.

Matthew, I know when we talked about this you had a great bit of tech that your son uses.

If you could share that that would be great

**MATTHEW:** Yeah, sure no problem.

I did work on a project for the 111 National Health Service during the Covid.

So, I have some experience, background.

So, one thing that the National Health Service 111 call needs to provide

captions so that is something they need to do, however in the meantime

the interior, you can download an app which translates speech to text.

At hospital you have to wear a mask and if you lipread or something

you can use the microphone and

one of my sons is a doctor so he speaks to the

app on his phone to translate speech to text and show it so I think most of

all the national health service NHS staff have a smartphone so they could

download an app, or you could download your app and ask them to speak to the

phone and translate their speech to text so you can read it.

So that's one really good thing and they are the 2 main things I would

recommend.

I'm just trying to remember what the questions were.

There were 2 questions.

What was the other one.

**ANNIE**: It was can you suggest how any

hospital staff or GPs can use tech to communicate with patients

who are deaf, or who have having lost so that was one

deaf, or who have hearing loss so that was one –

**MATTHEW:**

Yeah, so that would download your app. Yeah, what was the other one.

**ANNIE:** From you time working on 111,

on the Project.

**MATTHEW:**

Yeah, the NHS, 111.

At the moment when you call them, I mean you can do it online but if you

If you want to call them, they need to somehow provide captions, which they don’t right now.

You can if you have a caption enabled phone like Apple which James

mentioned in the iPhone, also the Google pixel and some versions of the

Samsung then you could dial in from your phone and it would translate

speech to text real-time.

You can use that that way.

**ANNIE:** Ok.

Thank you.

James, I know you've been working on the Accessible information standards.

I wondered if you could share a bit more about that and the connection with NHS and providing better communication.

**JAMES:** Sure.

Yes, I think there is some really good and exciting information here

because it is a source of a lot of frustration for many of us as deaf

people, our interaction with health services whether that is a GP or a pharmacist, or optician, or a hospital Ward or any kind of NHS or indeed, social care too, something called the Accessible Information Standard came into force in 2016.

So, it's 6 years old now, and it's going to be relaunched and in April next year, and what that does is it means that it is a legal requirement for Anybody who receives NHS Funding or Adult social care, Funding to ask people how they want to

communicated with so we're talking about disabled people with

communication needs which includes deaf people but also includes blind people, people

with learning disability, autistic people, anybody who would like to be

communicated with in an alternative way, it puts the pressure on the

provider of the service so the GP surgery or so on, to ask how you would

like to be communicated with.

To record that preference and then to share that

information with everybody you are going to come into contact with and to

make sure they keep communicating with you in that way

It is a really very, very significant bit of rights guidance.

it's not it's not its own legislation.

So, it's not it's not accurate to call it legislation, but it is a legal requirement.

So it is, you know, it's still mandatory.

And so, you can rely on the accessible information standard to basically get

communication that you want as a disabled person with communication

needs in a health setting.

So, if you want to be communicated with as Matthew indicated,

via captions you can ask for that but

actually, if you want somebody to

remove their mask and lipread you can ask for that too.

It's up to you about what you want it's not up to you.

It is up to you about what you want.

It is not up to you to

fall into the box that's been given to you, different to the equality acts, not about reasonable adjustment, it's about what you want, and what you need.

So that includes British sign language interpreter, for example,

Or it might include information in Braille or Recorded Information, or easy read, information, or and so on. So, it's a really big deal.

or recorded information, or easy read information or so on so it is a really

big deal.

The problem is not enough people know about it and not enough people enforce

it or talk about it so we did a big piece of work with other charities

last year.

to try and survey people, we asked a 1,000 people whether they were whether they saw that happening both disabled people but also professionals.

And the results are really frightening sadly the Compliance is very poor, but NHS England are working very hard to Relaunch the Standard, as I say, next April and luckily, We're Involved with that Work and They're trying really Hard to Improve the Standard to Improve.

Improve awareness of so it I would encourage everybody on the call to

look it up and we can share some links to the information that you are

gonna circulate later, on and to kind of know, your rights, and to ask for what your what you do

because a lot of disabled people work very hard to win these rights and we

need to make sure that people are aware of them

and working with us in a way that is accessible.

My charity SignHealth,

we exist only because health information is inaccessible.

There's no reason for deaf people's health to be poor, deaf people should have the same health as hearing people.

Unfortunately, we don't have really bad health, because the system's bad, system is inaccessible.

And the way to

make it accessible is through the information standards. So, it is a very

important piece of guidance and I would encourage

Everyone, to kind of get empowered and talk, to a local GP surgery, about what you need.

**ANNIE:** Definitely.

Yeah, definitely, and yeah, we'll be sharing more about that and

especially with the relaunch in April as well.

Stuart, do you have anything more to add on this particular question?

**STUART:** Ah, well, the only thing that

occurred to me is if you have someone who is hard of hearing, then what you normally do, is you try and face them and speak clearly, and if someone is

elderly, their hearing is going, but they don't want to admit it of course,

, then that probably becomes more important.

I mean you could say, why don't you try automatic captioning.

But then it's like you know. I don't need that.

My hearing is fine so that’s the only thing I can think to add.

ANNIE: Ok, thank you.

And then, just finally, just question for Iain, do you have anything to add on

that point?

**IAIN:** I don't really, other than just ask.

So, if it is at a GP surgery and you do require help with captioning or to

understand what is going on, just ask.

I know our local GP surgery you know

I actually just enquire, what functions they have, and they are more than happy to accommodate people with a hearing

loss or a vision loss and they have some protocols in place.

So often it is just a question of asking whether they do or don't.

I gather from James, that is new information for me that your legal

Requirement, but certainly I think you know,

it is certainly worth asking to see if they can help you.

**ANNIE:**

Okay, well, thank you so much, and for all of your suggestions, and valuable insights into tech approaches that can help.

So, Louise we did have a poll, I'm just looking at the time, I think

we're actually move straight on to questions from attendees just so that

So, we can ask as many questions as possible from attendees.

We've got 36.

So yeah, we won't have a chance to go through everything. Today.

But like, I say we'll pose the questions on email and share them with you afterwards.

today but like I say, we'll pose the questions on email and share them with

you afterwards.

So, let's have a look. The questions

I think Matthew, you mentioned a are going to answer the question what was

what was the second type of captions that you said you used.

**MATTHEW:** There are 2 types of captions.

One is human captions which is typed by an actual writer.

Which is what we have now.

The other is auto captions translates speech to text.

The human is much more accurate.

It provides, the nuance of the conversation.

It fills up the missing gaps and makes it look good whereas the auto

captions translates word by word and if you have a speech impairment or a very

strong accent it doesn't always come up very well.

Like mine.

But it actually at the same time helps my speech because I'm trying to

improve my speech by looking at the captions but it is more real-time.

And I sometimes don't mind if it is not so accurate so that I'm able to

keep up with conversation so they are the 2 main types of captions.

**ANNIE:**

Okay, thank you, I've got a question from Helen to James just a quick question of who can we follow up with about the accessible information standard relaunch that is happening in April?

Just you know, is there a particular web address or just to Google, accessible information standard

**JAMES:** Hi Helen.

Hi Helen, it's wonderful that you're joining the Webinar today.

There will be a lot more information coming out when the standard relaunches in April.

We'll be supporting that at SignHealth so definitely keep an eye on our social media but yes as you know NHS England owns the standard so they

will be doing communication on it, there is a lot of work to do, I'm

I'm really

hopeful they can keep their timeline of the April relaunch and we'll do what we can

to help them

But if it gets delayed, then of course, we'll, we'll update everyone the standard isn't due to change right to clear anything like that I think, our hope, working, with NHS England is, that I hope is to as I say kind of

Reinvigorate People's Understanding, and awareness of it.

because it didn't happen as well as we all wanted it to back in 2016

but yeah, we will be working very hard at SignHealth to do a lot of

of communication about it. in the in the spring, I guess

**ANNIE:** Thank you.

A question from Cat which might be something that Iain and Stuart, you

may have encountered this as take volunteers.

do you have any suggestions, if somebody experiences barriers, with written text and so Dyslexia Literacy, and other related and Issues.

I don't know if that is something you feel able to respond to.

I don't know if it is something you need to think about.

**IAIN:** Probably need to think about it. A little bit, and is it is that on top of hearing, loss, as well, as hearing loss, there's a yeah, right a problem with the Dyslexia as well, so it makes reading the captions, difficult yeah, that's the thing probably I I'm yeah, I’d have to think, about that a little bit I think

**ANNIE:** I think so.

**IAIN:** I'd have to think about that a

Maybe, sure, I don't know if you've got any suggestions.

little bit I think maybe Stuart, I don't know if you have got any

But yeah, I'll have to think about that for a bit.

**STUART:** Not specifically no.

I do know, I mentioned earlier the AbilityNet website has a number of

fact sheets and I mentioned one, hearing loss and computing which has

got a bunch of useful information in it but it has got it on a whole range

of Disabilities and I know there is one on

Dyslexia which might help anybody who Has that that difficult?

**ANNIE:** There was just related to that

Yeah, and there was just related to that there was also a question about dementia and potential connections with hearing. Loss.

I think we also have a fact sheet about dementia and computing.

Just a point here from Lavignia Ramwell she says she signed up for 999 via text messages, to so just something to mention in case people, aren't

aware that that option is

I think just looking at the time just very close to the end of the session

but like I said.

We'll gather up the questions and share them amongst our panel who have

kindly agreed to look at them and then we'll put the Q&As on the webinar

recording page in the next couple of days and then share that with you,

with a link to access it.

So, thanks so much again Matthew, James, Iain and Stuart and yeah, just

a little bit more information

about AbilityNet and you might not already be aware of that

offer free IT support at home and online along with fact sheets and

webinars on our website at abilitynet.org.uk

You can also call our helpline on 0800 048 7642.

We're open 9 to 5 Monday to Friday you

can access the tech support at www.abiltynet.org.uk/at-home

Like I mentioned earlier, we've got lots of Tech Volunteers, around the country to help solve any IT issues you might have.

Then we also run online training sessions on digital accessibility you

can find out more about those at/training, we have a special code

you can use on our 2023 courses

which is AbilityNet Webinar 10 and that's for 10% off but we have free courses, coming up in January.

First one is the introduction to digital accessibility on the 19th

January and then a training course how to build a disability inclusive

workplace on the 25th of January.

then finally you can also sign up to our E Newsletter for the Latest

announcements about accessibility webinars, like this session, and the

next webinar is coming up, we've got one next Tuesday on the 13th of December

where we'll be speaking with David Padmore and Matt Simpson of ITV so

finally thank you once again to Matthew, James, Iain and Stuart and

everyone who has joined us.

Please do complete the feedback form that you will be directed to at the end and then we'll be in touch soon.

Bye everybody.