

A roundup of communication tools for remote working

In today's high-tech world, a range of communication tools are available to help remote workers stay connected.

During Covid-19, more and more organisations are using video conferencing apps to work together 'face-to-face' when meeting in person isn't possible. For employees with hearing loss, this is a positive move as they can still use visual cues to follow the conversation – lip movements, body language, facial expressions and hand gestures. Other solutions are also available to facilitate knowledge sharing and communication from home. Here's a roundup of some of the most popular options available for staff with hearing loss:

Zoom

- automatic video captions available
- unlimited one-to-one video calls
- 40-minute limit on group video meetings (3 to 100 people) with the Basic /Free package
- for longer meetings someone needs a Pro subscription (it doesn't have to be the host).

[More information](#)

Skype

- automatic video captions available
- unlimited video meeting calls for up to 50 people with Free package
- works on phones, tablets and computers with webcams
- everyone who wants to join a group conversation must use Skype.

[More information](#)

Microsoft Teams

- limited live captions available on desktop app and mobile – only as a preview feature
- audio, video and screen-sharing activity can be recorded in Teams meetings. Automatic transcription allows users to playback the conversation and search within the transcript
- supports up to 250 call participants
- chat messaging function.

[More information](#)

Google Duo

- video and audio calling app from Google
- if anyone doesn't have an Apple device, Google Duo is basically an Android version of FaceTime
- free to use and works on tablets, computers and iOS and Android smartphones
- group calling limit of eight people

[More information](#)



Google Hangouts

- automatic video captions available
- for video calls, phone calls and messages
- video calls can include up to 10 people for free (on Gmail, G Suite Basic packages) or 25 people (using Business, Education packages)
- everyone who wants to join a group conversation must use Hangouts/have a Google account.

[More information](#)



Relay UK

- previously called Next Generation Text
- allows people with hearing loss to make and receive calls which are translated into text by a relay assistant
- download the Relay UK app to use it on a smartphone, tablet or PC
- the service is also available to make calls with a textphone.

[More information](#)



Personal listening devices

- wireless microphones like the Roger Pen and Roger Select amplify conversations for people with hearing loss
- connect to Bluetooth-enabled mobile phones and smartphones for clearer calls
- transmit sound directly to compatible hearing aids
- plug in headphones for non hearing aid users.

[More information](#)



Video relay services

- allows hearing people and Deaf people to communicate via the phone
- a Deaf person can use their smartphone or tablet to call a hearing person on their mobile or landline
- the conversation is relayed through a British Sign language interpreter using video
- the interpreter will sign what the hearing person is saying to the Deaf person and voice back to the hearing person what the Deaf person is signing.

[More information](#)



Amplified phones

- make audio calls clearer and easier to understand
- hearing aid-compatible with adjustable volume, tone and balance control
- popular amplified phones include the Geemarc CL595 corded photophone and Switel TF540 corded phone
- choose the Phoneplus phone amplifier to make an existing phone louder.

[More information](#)

Find out more

This helpful blog from **Limping Chicken** - **Tips for working remotely** when you're deaf (with BSL videos) - explains how to get the most from video conferencing apps.

bighack.org/best-videoconferencing-apps-and-software-for-accessibility

Visit our **Louder than Words** website for more information about supporting staff and customers who are deaf or have hearing loss.

 louderthanwords.org.uk or get in touch on  0333 240 5658