

## **Telecommunications Working Group**

### **Purpose & Activities**

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The current Mission Statement of Hearing Concern is as follows:

Hearing Concern is a national charity dedicated to improving the quality of life for those who are hard of hearing. We are a volunteer led organisation whose main objectives are to provide advice, information and support, to promote communication access and to raise public awareness of the issues associated with hearing loss.

Within this context, the purpose of the Telecommunications Working Group is:

To further the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people in their use of telecommunication networks and services and endeavour to ensure that the networks and services are readily available in an equitable form and at an equitable cost.

#### **To achieve this, we:**

Monitor technical and service development in telecommunication systems and terminal equipment and campaign for the inclusion and/or retention of suitable facilities for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Investigate problems experienced by deaf and hard of hearing people when using telecommunications systems, services and terminal equipment.

Monitor the development of national, European and International directives and standards in all aspects of telecommunications.

Monitor and comment on Government legislation and the work of Government agencies and statutory bodies in the telecommunications sector.

Liaise with and work with other related charities and organisations and representation on the national co-ordinating body, the Telecommunications Action Group (TAG).

Monitor access to telecommunications based services (eg Emergency services, Call Steering)

In practice, we take cognisance of text-based telecommunications and will deal with issues as they arise but these are not our priority as other organisations have significant concern for text-based issues. This gives us the opportunity to concentrate on issues relating to the overall availability of telecommunications, particularly to inductive and radio coupling, terrestrial, digital mobile and digital domestic (DECT) telephones.

**Current activities include:**

Furthering the voice of hard of hearing people in the OFCOMS bill.

Mobile phone industry Code of Practice.

Telephones: pressing for retention of and improvements in inductive coupling and consideration of low impedance audio interfaces.

Emergency Communications – Emergency Services, Roadside Phones.

Hospital telephone services and Bedside Communications.

Mobile phones: Interference and adaptive aids.

DECT cordless telephones.

Influencing retailers in terms of: labelling telephones and retailer services to customers.

Call Steering.

**Future possibilities:**

Blue Tooth and Blue Ear radio coupling.

Feeding information to Hearing Concern members via the magazine.

Feeding information to business and other organisations via a variety of methods including seminars and presentations.

Obtaining feedback from Hearing Concern members about issues in which we have an interest or are researching.

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