



About TAG



Promoting access to
electronic communica-
tions for deaf people

www.tagcomm.org.uk

tagenquiries@hotmail.com

TAG aims to ensure that deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people can obtain access to all types of electronic communication as easily and at the same cost as hearing people. An umbrella body of the main national and regional organisations for deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people in the UK, TAG consists of delegates from thirteen member organisations and several co-opted members with specific expertise and skills. This enables TAG to act as a channel between the deaf organisations and service providers, manufacturers and government bodies and regulators to highlight the needs of users

TAG member organisations

British Deaf Association
Deafness Support Network
deafPLUS
Hearing Concern
LINK
National Association of Deafened
People
National Deaf Children's Society
Royal Association in Aid of Deaf
People
Royal National Institute for Deaf
People
Sense

Communications Act 2003

Telecoms and broadcasting are now controlled by the Communications Act 2003 which also established Ofcom as the regulator. The Act also resulted in

the setting up of the Advisory Committee on Older and Disabled People. TAG has regular meetings with Ofcom and continues to ensure that the needs of deaf people are not overlooked.

Broadcasting & Telecommunications

As a result of increasing convergence between broadcasting and telecommunications, TAG broadened its remit during 2004 to make it possible to address the full spectrum of electronic communications. This is particularly important in view of the growing importance of digital television, and access services such as subtitled and signed programmes.

Access to Work Scheme

Many deaf, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people are unable to use ordinary voice telephones or mobile handsets and need special equipment to enable them to use the telephone network. At work it may be possible to obtain special telephone equipment through the Access to Work Scheme. It is difficult to give hard and fast guidelines because the Scheme seems to operate differently depending on where you live. If you think special telephone equipment would help you to carry out your job, try contacting a Disability Employment Advisor through your local Jobcentre Plus.

BT TextDirect

BT TextDirect, which provides a

platform for telephone calls by textphone users, was launched in July 2001. BT TextDirect can be used both for calls between two textphones and for calls between textphones and voice telephones via the relay service, RNID Typetalk. Access to the BT TextDirect platform is by dialling a prefix before the telephone number you require—18001 if you are a textphone user, 18002 if you are a voice telephone user. All telephone providers have to give text users access to a relay service, and the majority do so by means of BT TextDirect. Mobile networks have only had this obligation since the beginning of 2004. BT customers get a special tariff that reduces the cost of the text portion of calls made via TextDirect by 60% and other providers should also offer rebates to textphone users. BT TextDirect also gives text users access to the emergency services by dialling 18000.

For more information about BT TextDirect, contact RNID Typetalk, PO Box 284, Liverpool L69 3UZ, telephone 18001 0800 500 888 (Text), 0800 7311 888 (Voice).

Text Payphones

The New Text Payphone, a BT payphone that has a full keyboard and which originally offered access to email and SMS as well as voice calls, has been upgraded to allow BT TextDirect calls as well. There are now almost 2,000 payphones in towns and cities around the UK that have TextDirect capability.

A list of their locations is published on the BT website. There is a link to this on the TAG website—see above. Look out for these new payphones on the street, in airports, railway stations and elsewhere.

The New Text Payphone is not the same as the Multiphone which has a screen and offers Internet access but does not have access to TextDirect.

April 2006