

Closing the Employment Gap: EFHOH launches Inclusive Employment Toolkit

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) is excited to announce its new publication, the *Hearing Loss Inclusive Employment Toolkit*, which addresses common assumptions and misunderstandings about employees who are hard of hearing. The toolkit offers straightforward, practical advice for employers. Created with input from hard of hearing experts, it incorporates real-life experiences and obstacles faced in typical workplaces.

Hearing loss is one of the most prevalent yet least visible disabilities in Europe. In the workplace, where communication is central to most professional activities, barriers arise when work environments are not designed to be hearing loss friendly.

The numbers are startling.

- Employment level of hard of hearing Europeans remains at **40-44%** in comparison to 75% for non-disabled people.
- **80%** of respondents to our recent EFHOH-AEA survey did not receive accommodations as requested.
- **31%** of respondents who requested accommodations, experienced discrimination and further exclusion

EFHOH addresses employment accessibility and the reduction of employment gaps by utilising the BioPsychoSocial Model of disability¹. Although hearing aids and cochlear implants facilitate improved hearing and communication, they may not sufficiently mitigate the difficulties posed by noisy environments. Workplace accommodations are essential for eliminating these obstacles, thereby fostering a more inclusive environment for everyone.

A range of accommodations, such as automated captions, written communication tools, and accessible meeting practices, are already widely available, effective, and typically cost-efficient.

Inclusive employment is key to enabling all employees to participate effectively and benefit the entire workforce.

¹ The BioPsychoSocial (BPS) model of disability views disability as the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors, bridging the medical focus on health conditions and the social focus on barriers.



The EFHOH *Hearing Loss Inclusive Employment Toolkit* provides clear guidance, together with a checklist to support consistent implementation of these solutions and help close the employment gap for hard of hearing people.

EFHOH strongly encourages employers as well as hard of hearing employees to use the toolkit towards better inclusion for all and remains available to provide further guidance to employers and other stakeholders.

EFHOH *Hearing Loss Inclusive Employment Toolkit* is now available to download [HERE](#).

The checklist is also available separately [HERE](#).