



CASE STUDY

Heartland

“Becoming a Hearing Accredited Workplace has helped us to make hearing awareness a greater part of our everyday conversation.”

Keira Billot, Heartland.

A transformation has taken place at Heartland.

"Heartland is committed to fostering a workplace where all people feel welcome and able to bring their whole self to work. Through working with the National Foundation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Heartland aims to begin breaking down any communication barriers within the organisation and with customers." says Keira Billot from Heartland.

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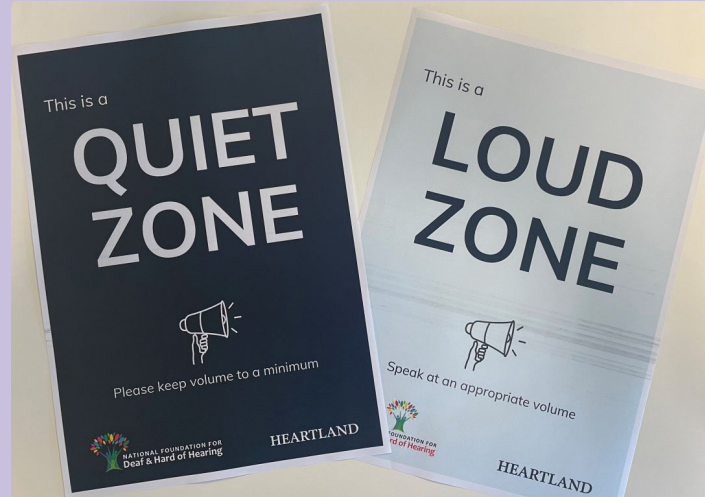
THE HEARTLAND TEAM IS PROUD TO BE THE FIRST ORGANISATION AWARDED 'HEARING ACCREDITED WORKPLACE.'

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HEARTLAND



(Left) Heartland team attending an introduction to New Zealand Sign Language class for NZSL week.



(Above) Heartland has created sound zones, to help ensure the team are aware of those who may need a quiet space.

More than 300,000 people in New Zealand are Deaf or hard of hearing, which is nearly 10% of the population. In an effort to make banking services more accessible for this community, Heartland has worked to become the country's first Hearing Accredited Workplace in 2021.

Founding the hearing committee.

Heartland recognises the challenges faced by those who are hard of hearing or Deaf in the community and workplace. As part of Heartland's Wellness at Work assessment and a vulnerable customer review, the organisation decided to complete the 12-step programme to become a Hearing Accredited Workplace, set out by the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NFDHH).

To bring this goal to life, Heartland established a Hearing Committee, responsible for implementing change and creating a hearing-aware culture.

Becoming a Hearing Accredited Workplace.

The committee set to work identifying areas that needed change. To begin with, Heartland held workshops and free hearing screenings for employees in conjunction with NFDHH. This proved highly successful in raising awareness with employees on how hearing can be lost, as well as the importance of having annual hearing checks.

Relevant Heartland employees have been trained in how to be more aware of the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing customers: communicating via the NZ Relay Service when required; recognising when to hold face-to-face meetings in quiet rooms; and in knowing when to ask if assistance is required to interpret the conversation.

Heartland also has a Customer Support Flag that can be activated in its banking system if a customer informs the team that they are Deaf or hard of hearing, meaning they will not have to explain their needs again each time they contact the bank.

Within Heartland's recruitment space, the team has completed online training to ensure all processes are equitable for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. There is also now a section included in job ads which asks candidates whether they require interpreter assistance during an interview.

Heartland continues to hold educational workshops, including a Deaf Culture and NZSL workshop (which was well-attended both in-person and over Zoom), as well as an introduction to NZSL course during New Zealand Sign Language Week.

There's always room to grow.

Heartland is committed to remaining a Hearing Accredited Workplace. In conjunction with NFDHH, the organisation has planned the next 12 months of activities to continue growing a hearing aware-culture, assisting customers who are Deaf or hard of hearing and enhancing the workplace for employees.



Keira Billot

Chief People & Culture Officer
Heartland



CASE STUDY

Treescape

Prioritising hearing health and supporting Deaf and hard of hearing employees at Treescape.

Patrick Crowskey, Treescape.

Putting the spotlight on inclusivity and noise safety.

“Treescape are very proud to be one of the first companies to become a fully Hearing Accredited Workplace. We are committed to working alongside the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the future to ensure that we are inclusive of employees who are Deaf and hard of hearing and to minimise the risk of hearing loss for our current employees,” says Patrick Crowskey, Chief People & Safety Officer.

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WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT WE PROTECT THE HEARING OF OUR EXISTING EMPLOYEES AND REMAIN AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE TO EMPLOYEES WHO ARE DEAF OR HEARD OF HEARING.

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Starting the hearing awareness journey.

Treescape partnered with the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NFDHH) in 2019 as a foundation member of the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme. Treescape received practical tools and training to become more inclusive of the 880,000+ New Zealanders who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Working alongside NFDHH, Treescape has put into place multiple initiatives that better support those who are Deaf and hard of hearing and to ensure our staff do not incur hearing loss while at work.

Taking action.

Treescape has made some significant changes to the way the organisation operates day to day to ensure team members who are Deaf or hard of hearing are supported and that the risks of noise-induced hearing loss are mitigated. These include:

- The team communicating using Microsoft Teams with captioning, to ensure those who are Deaf or hard of hearing can fully participate in meetings, in online conference calls and in the field.
- Treescape has updated the organisation's emergency evacuation plan to ensure staff and visitors are evacuated safely, even if they are unable to hear the alarm.
- Regular free online and in-person hearing checks are made available to all staff to monitor hearing health and raise awareness about the warning signs of hearing loss. This is essential for helping to ensure hearing health is maintained.
- To improve safety in the field, employees have

been trained to use hand signals to communicate between ground staff and arborists, in addition to using walkie talkies. The walkie talkies can also be adjusted to suit the user (i.e. volume can be turned up).

Upcoming changes.

In addition to these steps, a nationwide project is in progress to standardise Treescape-issued hearing protection. Treescape will be upgrading to the best gear on the market; 3M fit test helmets. Once this is achieved, Treescape will be able to test each set to ensure the maximum protection is achieved by adjusting helmet straps (so the muffs sit in the correct position), and ensuring the hygiene kits seal properly around the ears.

Treescape will also be purchasing more electric chainsaws, which are much quieter than their fuel-powered counterparts, further protecting their employees' hearing.

Treescape is committed to working with the NFDHH in the coming years to ensure that we protect our employees' hearing and are providing an inclusive workplace where employees who are Deaf or hard of hearing can thrive.



AUCKLAND CITY HOSPITAL



CASE STUDY

Auckland DHB

“Auckland DHB is an organisation that values equity and inclusion and we want this to be a great place to work for people with disabilities.”

Mel Dooney, Auckland District Health Board

Helping ADHB thrive in accessibility and awareness.

"We are committed to supporting our diverse workforce and identifying barriers to job applicants, employees and patients with disabilities, and to develop a plan to address these, making it easy for everyone to work here and thrive.

The Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme provides us with a framework, resources and support to work through, that helps us recognise and improve communication barriers so that our staff, patients, visitors and whānau have a positive experience working in and/or accessing our services" - says Mel Dooney.

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THE HEARING ACCREDITED WORKPLACE PROGRAMME PROVIDES US WITH A FRAMEWORK, RESOURCES AND SUPPORT.

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Over 880,000 Kiwis are Deaf or hard of hearing, and 38% are of working age (18-64). According to the World Health Organisation, current levels of hearing loss are expected to double over the next three decades.

Putting the spotlight on Deafness and hearing loss.

Auckland DHB is a founding member of the Accessibility Tick and already had an accessibility action plan in place before they started working with the with the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NFDHH). In 2020, a gap analysis related to deafness and hearing loss was conducted across the organisation and specific actions related to actively working towards creating a positive and inclusive environment for everyone with hearing loss were added to that plan.

To help achieve these goals, ADHB chose to join the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme to progress specific actions and foster a more hearing aware culture across all areas of the workplace including recruitment, communications, occupational health & safety.

Their accessibility steering committee meet quarterly to ensure actions as per their plan are progressing.

Implementing change and creating a hearing-aware culture.

To begin with, ADHB delivered Hearing Health and Deaf Awareness workshops to employees and offered free hearing checks for staff in conjunction with NFDHH. Free full diagnostic test vouchers were provided to staff where a follow-up was recommended after their initial screening. Both screenings and workshops were embraced by

employees, with many eager to learn about the importance of protecting their hearing for life.

Working alongside the NFDHH, ADHB developed an action plan for 2021 which included ten recommendations for improvement.

Auckland DHB's team have since created a "Deaf and hard of hearing" webpage to share information and resources, as well as upload the NFDHH's learning modules to the DHB Online Learning Platform. They have also designed, printed and distributed cards demonstrating how to sign common words useful in a medical environment.

ADHB continues to grow a hearing aware culture and is focused on improving training and awareness. In 2022 they will look to make employees more aware of alternative ways to communicate and will provide recruitment team training and resources to ensure accessible hearing loss awareness protocols are followed.

2022 will be our best year yet!

"We're glad to receive full accreditation to become a hearing inclusive workplace. As part of our accreditation journey, we have increased awareness of communication barriers and what we can do to break them down to improve experiences for our staff, patients, visitors and whanau" - Mel Dooney.



Mel Dooney

Chief People Officer



CASE STUDY

Auckland Transport

“We truly value the work we’ve done to date and look forward to a long and meaningful partnership with the National Foundation for Deaf and hard of hearing.”

Brett Bishop, Auckland Transport.

Creating "Easy Journey's" for the Deaf and hard of hearing.

Auckland Transport (AT) is a values-driven organisation that believes in doing the right thing by its people, customers, partners and the communities it serves. They’re also committed to employing and supporting a workforce that reflects the face of Tamāki Makaurau.

Bearing this in mind, and with 1 in 6 New Zealanders having some form of hearing loss, AT jumped at the chance to partner with the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NFDHH).

“The partnership means we can proactively play a part in creating Easy Journey's (our organisational purpose) for the deaf and hard of hearing community who live in, and

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(Left) Testing the Auckland Transport teams hearing at their head office.



(Above) The Auckland Transport team enjoying a Deaf Awareness and New Zealand Sign Language Workshop.

travel through the Auckland region using public transport” says Brett Bishop, People Experience Lead for Auckland Transport.

"We truly value the work we've done to date and look forward to a long and meaningful partnership with the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The partnership is another way for us to demonstrate our core organisational values of:

- Auahatanga - Better, bolder, together.
- Manaakitanga - We care...full stop!
- Tiakitanga - Safe with us.
- Whanaungatanga - We connect."

Forming an action plan.

To complete the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme, Auckland Transport teamed up with AT whānau who are hard of hearing and those interested in creating better conditions for this group, developing a personalised action plan. They also met regularly with the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Community and Corporate Partnerships Manager, who provided support to help them on their way to become a Hearing Accredited Workplace.

A transformation is underway.

On its journey to become Hearing Accredited, Auckland Transport has undergone several changes that have significantly increased its accessibility to deaf and hard of hearing job candidates and employees.

After an extensive review of their recruitment & induction processes, AT now clearly states on all job applications that communication support including a sign language

interpreter or a speech-to-text app is available at interviews if required. In addition, Recruitment agencies have been briefed on Auckland Transport's ambition to recruit a diverse workforce, including people with hearing loss.

Along with these initiatives, AT offices provide small quiet rooms for people to use for focus work, limited to single or double occupants. Protocols have also been implemented to address general noise.

As well as this, people from across the organisation have attended workshops on Deaf Awareness and have had the opportunity to test their hearing via onsite screening kiosks.

AT are committed to making their workplace accessible for Deaf and hard of hearing employees and customers.

"Auckland Transport is currently consulting with Warren and Mahoney Architects to further enhance and make improvements to our work environment that will benefit our hard of hearing people. Another thing we are doing is running sign language classes for all people”.

Thank you so much to NFDHH for all of your help in getting us accredited, it's been an absolute pleasure working with you on this and I'm looking forward to continuing our partnership into the future."



Brett Bishop

People Experience Lead
Auckland Transport