

The Parent's Guide to Getting Help at School

A step-by-step guide for children who struggle to hear, listen and learn in the classroom.



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Welcome

If your child struggles to hear the teacher, follow conversations or cope in noisy classrooms, you're not alone.

Thousands of children across the UK experience listening difficulties every day. Some have hearing loss. Others have ADHD, autism, auditory processing difficulties (APD), speech and language needs, or simply find busy classrooms overwhelming.

Many parents are told to "wait for an assessment" or "see how things go."

But your child doesn't stop learning while they're waiting.

The good news is that schools have a duty to support children based on their needs, not simply on whether they have a diagnosis.

This guide explains exactly where to go, who to speak to and what support may be available.



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Does My Child Sound Like This?

Does your child...

- Frequently ask "What?"
- Miss parts of instructions
- Cope well one-to-one but struggle in class
- Become exhausted after school
- Say everyone mumbles
- Struggle more in noisy environments
- Lose concentration quickly
- Appear distracted
- Hear perfectly on hearing tests but still struggle
- Come home frustrated



If you ticked several boxes, your child may benefit from additional listening support.

The Biggest Myth

"We have to wait for a diagnosis."

This is one of the biggest misconceptions.

Schools are expected to support children according to their educational needs, not simply because they have a diagnosis.

Your child does NOT necessarily need the following before support can begin:

ADHD diagnosis

Autism diagnosis

APD diagnosis

Hearing loss diagnosis

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)

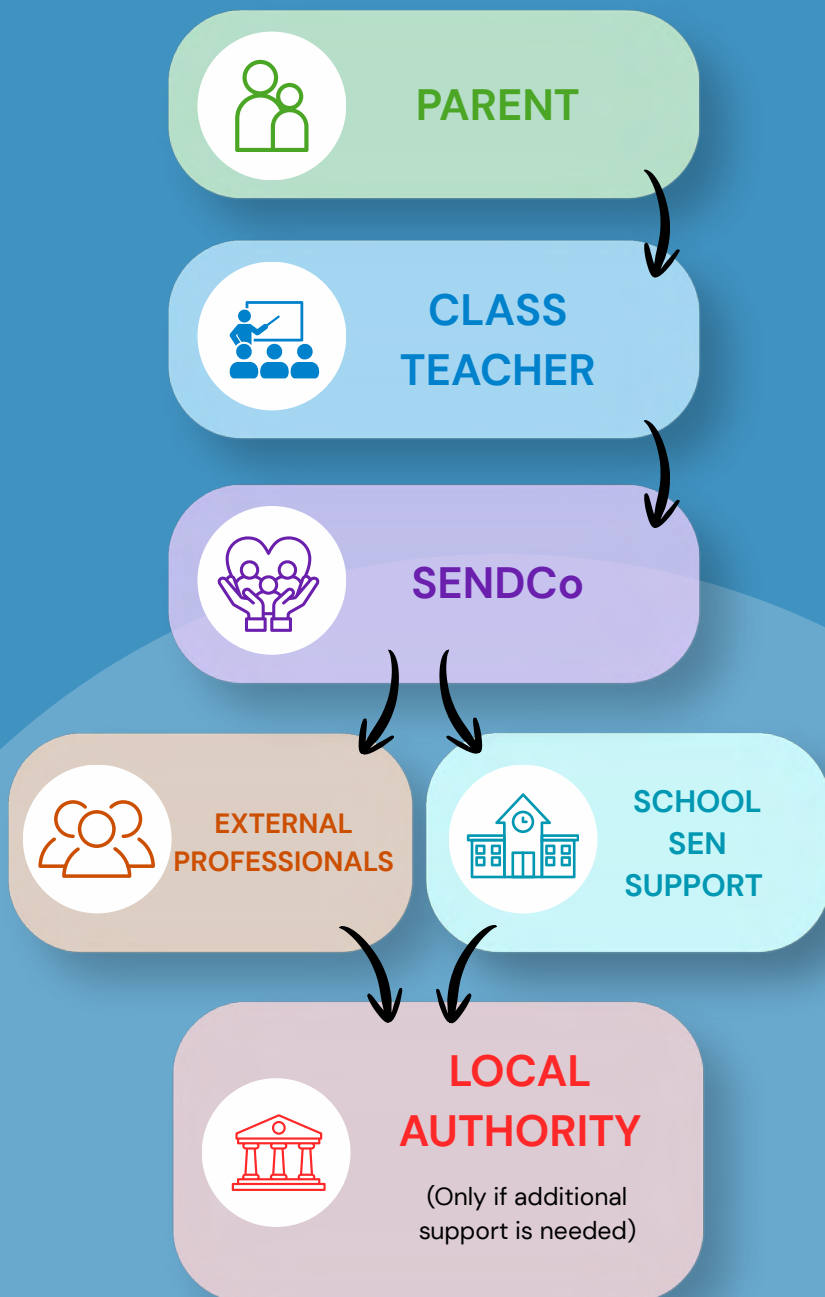
If a child is struggling to access learning, schools should begin making reasonable adjustments while assessments are ongoing.



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Who Does What?

When your child is struggling at school, it can be difficult to know who to speak to first. The diagram below shows how support usually progresses. In most cases, help begins within the school, with additional professionals and the Local Authority becoming involved only if more specialist support is needed.



PARENT

You know your child best. Share your concerns, ask questions and work with the school to identify what support may help.



CLASS TEACHER

Usually the first person to notice difficulties. They can make simple classroom adjustments and discuss concerns with the school's SENDCo.



SENDCo

The school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator oversees additional support, coordinates referrals and works with parents to put appropriate strategies in place.



EXTERNAL PROFESSIONALS

Depending on your child's needs, the school may involve professionals such as an audiologist, speech and language therapist, educational psychologist or paediatrician to provide specialist advice.



SCHOOL SEN SUPPORT

Support and strategies are put in place within the school and your child's progress is monitored and reviewed.



LOCAL AUTHORITY

If your child's needs cannot be fully met through the school's own resources, the Local Authority may become involved to assess whether additional support, funding or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required.



TOP TIP

Don't wait for a diagnosis before asking for help.

Schools can begin supporting children based on their needs while assessments are ongoing.





Step One - Speak to the Class Teacher

This should always be your first conversation.

Discuss:

- What you've noticed at home
- Situations your child struggles with
- Whether teachers have observed similar difficulties

Ask questions such as:

"Do they appear to miss verbal instructions?"

"Do they struggle more during group work?"

"Do they need information repeated?"

Step Two – Speak to the SENDCo

Most schools have a SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

Their role is to coordinate additional support.

They can:

- Observe your child
- Arrange classroom adjustments
- Monitor progress
- Introduce SEN Support
- Refer to outside professionals
- Trial assistive technology

Many parents never realise the SENDCo is often the person who can make things happen.



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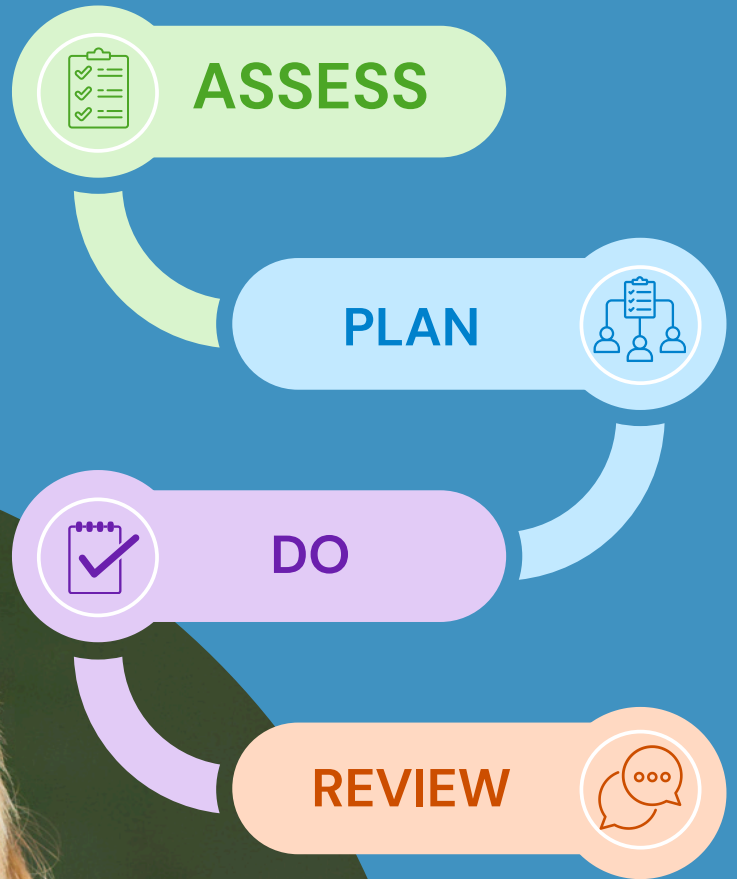
SEN Support Explained

Not every child needs an EHCP.

Most children receive help through SEN Support.

Support might include:

- Better seating
- Visual prompts
- Reduced distractions
- Smaller groups
- Extra processing time
- Assistive listening technology



What If My Child Doesn't Have A Diagnosis?

One of the biggest misconceptions is that a child must have a diagnosis before they can receive help at school. This simply isn't true.

Many children wait months, or even years, for assessments for ADHD, autism or other developmental conditions. During that time, they still need to learn, participate in lessons and achieve their potential.

Schools should not wait for a diagnosis before providing appropriate support. If a child is struggling to access learning, they should begin making reasonable adjustments based on their needs, not simply on a medical label.

Schools Can Help Before A Diagnosis


Your child's school can often introduce support while assessments are ongoing, including:

- Preferential seating near the teacher.
- Clearer written instructions.
- Extra time to process information.
- Reduced background distractions.
- Small group support.
- Trialling assistive listening technology where appropriate.

Support is based on your child's educational needs - not just a diagnosis.

If your child is finding it difficult to hear, listen or access learning, speak to their class teacher or SENDCo as soon as possible.

Early support can make a significant difference while assessments or referrals are underway.



Ella frequently misses instructions in class and comes home exhausted after school. Although she is waiting for an ADHD assessment, her school doesn't wait. She is moved closer to the teacher, given written instructions alongside verbal ones and supported through SEN Support while the assessment process continues.

Ella, age 8

Sam has normal hearing but struggles to understand his teacher when the classroom is noisy. The SENDCo arranges a trial of assistive listening technology and notices a significant improvement in his attention and confidence. The trial helps demonstrate his needs while further assessments are considered.

Sam, age 10



When Does The Local Authority Become Involved?

This is where many parents become confused.

The Local Authority usually becomes involved when:

- School support isn't enough
- An EHCP assessment is requested
- Specialist educational provision is needed
- Significant funding is required

The Local Authority doesn't replace the school.

Instead, it becomes involved when the level of support goes beyond what schools normally provide.

Understanding EHCPs

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document for children and young people whose needs cannot be fully met through the support normally available in school. It identifies a child's educational needs, the support they require and who is responsible for providing it.

Who Can Get An EHCP?

An EHCP may be appropriate if a child has significant or long-term educational needs that require more support than the school can reasonably provide from its own resources. This may include children with hearing loss, autism, ADHD, speech and language difficulties, or other conditions that have a substantial impact on learning.

Having a diagnosis does not automatically mean a child will receive an EHCP, and equally, a child does not always need a diagnosis for an EHCP assessment to be considered. The focus is on how their needs affect their education.



HOW IS AN EHCP REQUESTED?

An Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment can be requested by:

- Parents or carers
- The child's school or SENDCo
- A young person over the age of 16

The request is made to the Local Authority, who will decide whether a formal assessment is required.



WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE ASSESSMENT?

The Local Authority gathers information from a range of people who know your child, including:

- Parents or carers
- The school and SENDCo
- Educational psychologists
- Speech and language therapists
- Audiologists, Paediatricians, other relevant professionals

This evidence helps determine whether an EHCP is needed and what support should be provided.

An EHCP is about identifying the support your child needs - not simply confirming a diagnosis.

If the Local Authority agrees to carry out an assessment, the process should normally be completed within 20 weeks, although individual circumstances can vary.



What If My Child Already Has An EHCP?

If your child already has an EHCP, assistive listening technology may be included if it is considered necessary to help them access learning. Rather than simply describing a condition, an EHCP should explain what support is required to achieve the best educational outcomes.

Technology That May Be Included

Depending on your child's needs, an EHCP may recommend:

- Remote microphone systems
- Teacher microphones
- Classroom SoundField systems
- Personal listening devices
- Other assistive listening technology

These systems can help children hear the teacher more clearly, particularly in busy or noisy classrooms, reducing listening effort and improving access to learning.



HOW IS IT WRITTEN?

Some EHCPs specify the type of support required, for example:

"The pupil will have access to remote microphone technology throughout the school day to improve access to teacher speech."

Others may specify a particular device where there is clear evidence that a specific solution is required.

If you believe your child would benefit from assistive listening technology, discuss this with your school's SENDCo or the professionals involved in your child's annual EHCP review. Evidence from classroom observations or equipment trials can help demonstrate its benefits.



Can My Child Get Equipment Before An EHCP?

YES!

You do not need to wait for an EHCP before exploring assistive listening technology. Many children benefit from equipment while assessments are ongoing, and there are several ways it can be accessed.



THROUGH THE SCHOOL

Many schools purchase assistive listening equipment using their own SEND or inclusion budgets where they believe it will improve a child's access to learning.



EQUIPMENT TRIALS

Some schools and specialist suppliers can arrange demonstrations or short-term trials, allowing teachers and parents to see whether the technology improves listening, attention and classroom participation before making a purchasing decision.



NHS PROVISION

Some NHS paediatric audiology departments provide remote microphone systems for children with hearing loss. Availability varies between areas, so it's worth asking your audiologist what services are available locally.



PRIVATE PURCHASE

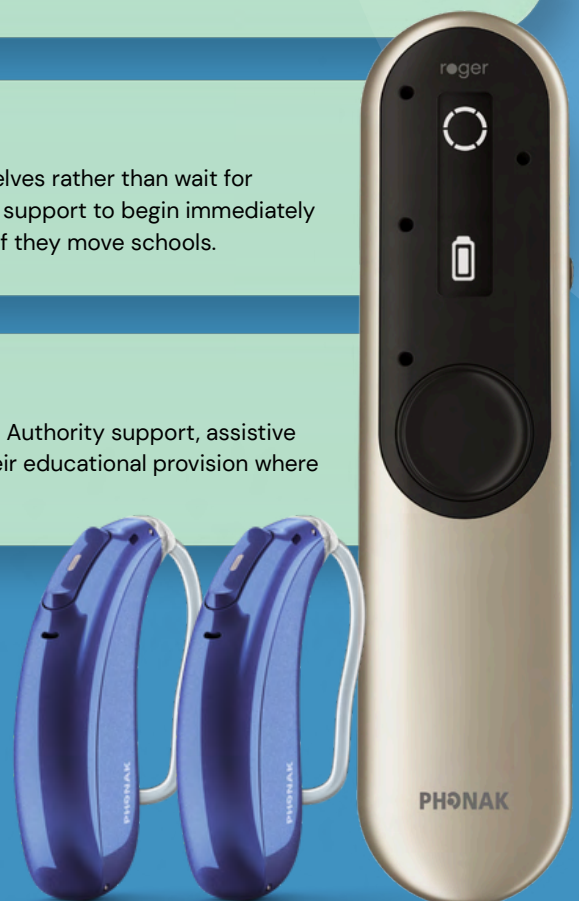
Some families choose to purchase equipment themselves rather than wait for funding or lengthy assessment processes. This allows support to begin immediately and means the equipment belongs to the child, even if they move schools.



LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

If your child later receives an EHCP or additional Local Authority support, assistive listening technology may be considered as part of their educational provision where appropriate.

Early support can make a real difference. If your child is struggling to hear or follow lessons, it's worth discussing all available options with your school rather than waiting for the EHCP process to be completed.



Who Pays?

There are several ways assistive listening technology can be funded. The most appropriate route depends on your child's needs, the support already in place and whether additional funding has been agreed.



KEY MESSAGE

You do not need an EHCP to access equipment. Support can come from a number of different sources.



WHERE SHOULD I START?

Always begin by speaking with your child's **Class Teacher or SENDCo**.

They can help identify your child's needs, explain what support is already available within school and advise whether additional funding or specialist services should be considered.



SCHOOL SEND BUDGET

Many schools have their own SEND or inclusion budget that can be used to purchase equipment for pupils with additional needs.

How it works:

- School assesses your child's needs
- School agrees equipment or support will help
- School purchases the equipment directly.

OR



LOCAL AUTHORITY (EHCP PROVISION)

If your child has an EHCP, the Local Authority may be responsible for funding equipment that is specified within the plan.

How it works:

- An EHCP identifies the support required.
- The Local Authority agrees the provision.
- Equipment is purchased or funded as part of the EHCP.

OR



PARENTS / CARERS (PRIVATE PURCHASE)

Some families choose to purchase equipment themselves rather than wait for assessments or funding decisions.

How it works:

- Equipment can be accessed immediately.
- It belongs to your child and can move with them if they change schools.
- Schools can still support its use in the classroom.

OR



CHARITABLE FUNDING

Some charities and grant providers may offer financial assistance towards specialist equipment.

How it works:

- Eligibility varies between organisations.
- Funding is usually application-based.
- Grants may cover all or part of the equipment cost.

OR



NHS (VARIES)

Some NHS Paediatric Audiology departments provide remote microphone systems for children with hearing loss.

How it works:

- Availability varies across the UK.
- Usually only provided where there is a clinical need.
- Ask your audiologist what services are available in your area.



TOP TIP

Don't wait to explore support.

Ask the school what is already available and whether equipment trials can be arranged.

Funding routes vary between schools and Local Authorities. Two children with similar needs may access support through different routes depending on local policies and individual circumstances.

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Assistive Listening Technology

Every classroom contains background noise. Chairs scrape across the floor, classmates whisper, projectors hum and windows let in sounds from outside. Even children with normal hearing can find it difficult to hear and understand their teacher in these environments.

Assistive listening technology is designed to improve access to speech by making the teacher's voice clearer while reducing the effects of distance and background noise.

How Does It Work?

A teacher wears a small microphone, which wirelessly transmits their voice directly to the child's listening device. Instead of trying to hear across a noisy classroom, the child hears the teacher's voice clearly, wherever they are sitting.

WHO CAN BENEFIT?

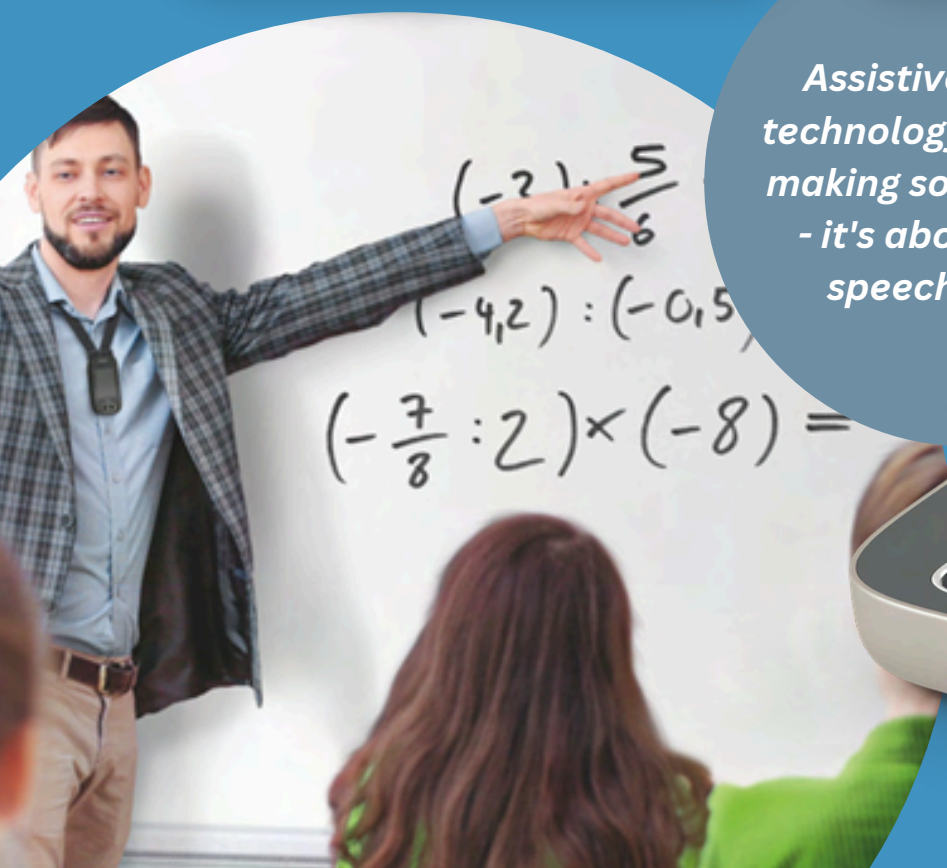
Assistive listening technology may help children who have:

- Hearing loss
- Auditory Processing Difficulties (APD)
- ADHD
- Autism
- Speech and language difficulties
- Listening fatigue
- Difficulty hearing in noisy classrooms despite normal hearing tests

WHY CAN IT HELP?

Many children report that they can hear the teacher more clearly, feel less tired at the end of the day and find it easier to stay focused during lessons. It can also reduce the need for instructions to be repeated and improve confidence when participating in class.

Assistive listening technology isn't about making sounds louder - it's about making speech clearer.



Working Together

Supporting a child with listening difficulties works best when everyone shares information and works towards the same goal. No single person has all the answers, but together they can build a clear picture of your child's needs.



PARENT

You know your child better than anyone. Share your observations, ask questions and work closely with the school throughout the process.



CLASS TEACHER

The teacher sees how your child manages in the classroom each day and can identify when additional support or adjustments may be needed.



SENDCo

The SENDCo coordinates support within school, reviews progress and arranges referrals to specialist services where appropriate.



AUDIOLOGIST

An audiologist assesses hearing, investigates hearing-related difficulties and can advise on hearing technology where appropriate.



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST

Speech and language therapists assess communication skills and recommend strategies to improve understanding, language and classroom participation.



EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Educational psychologists help identify barriers to learning and advise schools on strategies and support that will enable children to reach their potential.

REMEMBER

The best outcomes happen when everyone works together. Parents, schools and professionals all play an important role in helping children access learning, build confidence and thrive in the classroom.



Buying Equipment Privately

While funding may be available through schools, the NHS or the Local Authority, many families choose to purchase equipment themselves rather than wait. There is no right or wrong approach - it's about finding the best solution for your child.

Common Reasons Families Buy Privately

- Long waiting lists - Assessments and funding decisions can take months.
- Funding delays - Support may be agreed, but equipment isn't always provided immediately.
- Moving schools - Privately owned equipment moves with your child.
- Immediate support - Some families want to help their child as soon as possible rather than waiting.

Benefits of Private Purchase

- Access equipment straight away.
- Your child can begin benefiting immediately.
- It can continue to be used if your child changes schools.
- The equipment belongs to your family.

Buying privately doesn't affect your child's eligibility for future support or funding. If an EHCP or Local Authority funding is agreed later, this can still be considered separately.

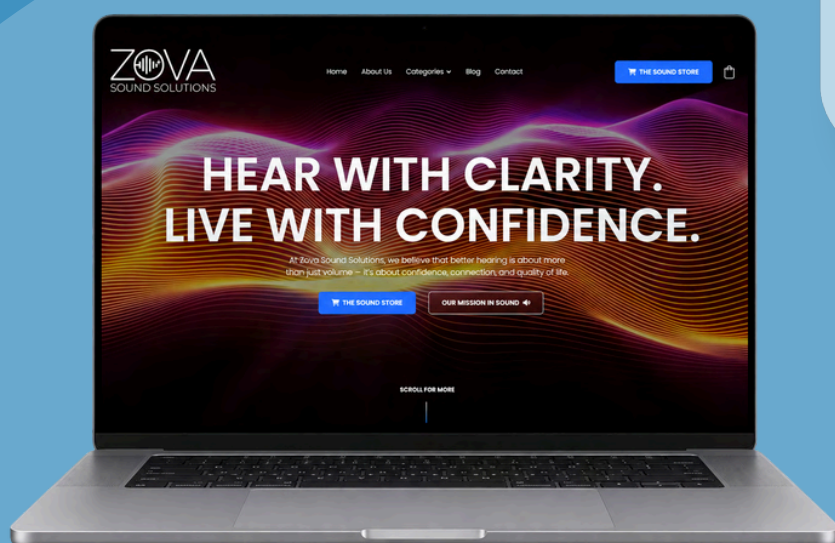


How Zova Can Help



We understand how challenging it can be to navigate school support, assessments and funding.

Zova isn't responsible for funding decision or diagnoses, but we're here to help you understand your options and find the right solution for your child.



Contact us today!

enquiries@zovasoundsolutions.co.uk

www.zovasoundsolutions.co.uk



Advice on available technology

Clear, impartial advice on the options that may help.



School quotations

Formal quotations for schools and funding applications.



Parent guidance

We guide parents through the choices or products available at Zova Sound Solutions.



Teacher guidance

Practical guidance for teachers on using technology effectively.



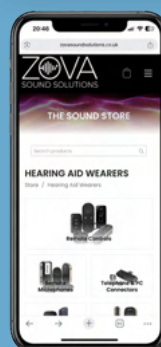
Workplace advice later in life

Support for young people and adults in education and work.



Ongoing support

We're here after purchase for setup, questions and advice.



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