

# Access to information & services for deaf people

Customer services and hotlines are being made accessible to deaf persons. Thanks to RelayService, deaf people and persons with hearing or speech impairments can arrange appointments on the phone, request information from service hotlines, etc.

«The start of the new RelayService is an important step towards accessible communication and equal opportunities for deaf people in Austria.» (Helene JARMER)

## RelayService

Organisation:	ÖGS.barrierefrei
Country/region of origin:	Austria
Beneficiaries targeted:	Persons with hearing impairments
Approach/model/solution:	Telephone operator services

## FACTS & FIGURES

- Approx. 14 requests per day
- In July 2013 the opening hours were extended to six hours daily
- The service is offered free of charge

## PROBLEMS TARGETED

Making an appointment on the phone, requesting information via a customer service hotline or informing a meeting partner about a potential delay: communicating via phones creates barriers to deaf people and persons with hearing or speech impairments.

## PROJECT

The relay assistants are known as 'the ears and voice' of the deaf community. Users send their requests to the assistant via

email, text message or fax, and the relay assistant makes the phone call and replies accordingly. It is also possible to contact the assistants via video chat or visit them at the office. In this instance, users can make their calls in real time.


## CURRENT SITUATION & OUTLOOK

For urgent calls, the RelayService offers an immediate communication service to conduct a conversation with a hearing correspondent. In this case it can replace the cost- and time-intensive use of sign language interpreters. The service is already frequently used and its opening hours should be extended to 24/7. The RelayService is cooperating with the University of Vienna, Institute for Ethics and Law in Medicine, to implement a pilot project in the field of healthcare: smooth communication is the basis for successful treatment.



The relay assistants are known as 'the ears and voice' of the deaf community. (Kerstin Reiger/ÖGLB)

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 • Access to cities

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