

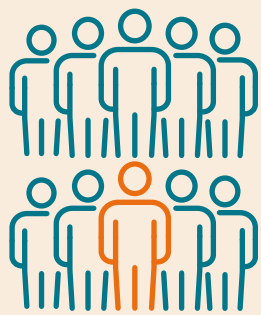


The Scale and Definition of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss affects over 56.6 million people across Europe and is set to rise sharply due to an ageing population. The condition ranges from mild to profound and is one of the most prevalent but under-recognised public health challenges.

PREVALENCE OF HEARING LOSS

Almost **1 in 10** people in Europe self-report having hearing loss.



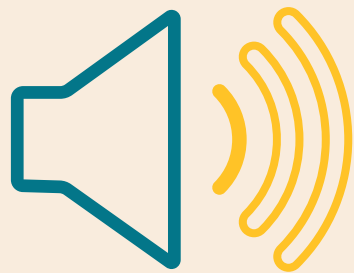
GLOBAL BURDEN

Worldwide, **1.57 billion** live with hearing loss. This is projected to rise to **2.45 billion** by 2050, a 56% increase since 2019.



DEFINITION

Hearing loss is defined as a reduction greater than **20 dB HL**. WHO grades range from Mild (**20–34 dB**) to Complete (≥ 95 dB HL).



DISABLING HEARING LOSS

WHO considers hearing loss over **35 dB HL** to be disabling.



TYPES OF HEARING LOSS



Conductive:

Sound blocked in the middle ear; often medically treatable.



Sensorineural (most common):

Inner ear or nerve damage; permanent but helped by hearing aids.

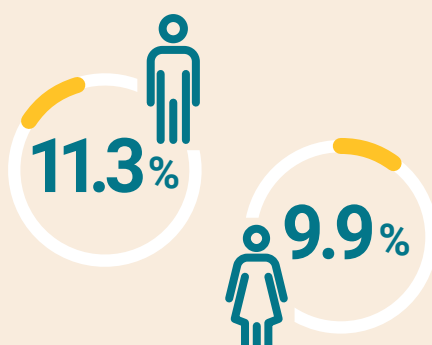


Mixed:

Combination of sensorineural and conductive problems.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Hearing loss is more common in men (**11.3%**) than in women (**9.9%**).



AGE FACTOR

About **1 in 5** people aged **65–74** live with hearing difficulties, and the figure climbs to more than **1 in 3** among those over 74.



This infographic is based on the EHIMA evidence paper "*Hearing care as a public health priority: Understanding its benefits and why improved access matters*" (October 2025).

Download and read the full position paper at hearingyou.org/policy