

Prevalence of hearing loss

- In Spain, there are over 1,230,000 people with hearing disabilities of different types and degrees. In addition to 3,400 children between the ages of 2 and 5. **Total: 1,233,400 people with a hearing disability, of whom more than 97% use spoken language to communicate.** According to the INE, 27,300 people (2%) use sign language.

(Survey into Disability, Personal Autonomy and Situations of Dependence 2020, INE)

- **Five in every thousand newborns** have hearing loss of different type and degree. In Spain, given the current birth rate, this means that every year there are about 1,890 families with a child with hearing loss.

(Commission for the Early Detection of Hearing Loss)

(Spanish Society of Otorhinolaryngology)

- **More than 95% of children with hearing loss** are born into hearing families.

(Gallaudet University Research Institute, United States, 2002)

(FIAPAS Sociological Study. Socio-educational status of people with hearing loss in Spain, 2020)

- **50% of adolescents and young adults aged 12-35 years** in developed countries are at risk of developing hearing loss as a result of overexposure to noise in recreational settings and improper use of devices

(World Health Organization)

- The **presbycusis** (hearing loss caused by the ageing of the auditory system) affects approximately **30% of the general population between 65 and 70 years of age**, reaching **80% of those over 75 years of age**. Noise pollution and lifestyle are leading to an increase in progressive or age-related hearing loss which also appears early, at around 50 years of age.

(Spanish Society of Otorhinolaryngology)



📍 C/ Pantoja, 5, local. 28002 Madrid

☎ 91 576 51 49

🌐 www.fiapas.es - www.queleoescuchetodoelmundo.com

Descarga el Manifiesto FIAPAS en www.bibliotecafiapas.es



@FIAPAS2026 Depósito legal M-23876-2026

WORLD DEAF DAY

27 de September 2026

FIAPAS MANIFESTO



CONFEDERACIÓN
ESPAÑOLA
DE FAMILIAS
DE PERSONAS SORDAS

SPANISH CONFEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF DEAF PEOPLE

RIGHT TO HEAR, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION

To mark World Deaf Day, the Spanish Confederation of Families of Deaf People (FIAPAS) presents the following MANIFESTO to society and public authorities.

In 2026, it will be twenty years since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Two decades later, the challenge remains the same: ensuring that the rights enshrined in the Convention are fully realised in the everyday lives of people with disabilities.

This summer, the United Nations General Assembly took a further step by recognising access to technologies and assistive products as a priority for inclusion, equity, and equal opportunities. Over these twenty years, there have been significant advances for deaf people. Public healthcare has also progressed. But still not enough.

In 2000, as a result of FIAPAS' advocacy, the provision for hearing aids was incorporated into the National Health System for the first time, initially for those up to 16 years of age. In 2019, this was extended to those up to 26.

These were advances that we recognised and valued at the time; however, they fall short. The provision exists, but access remains subject to age restrictions and eligibility criteria that fail to adequately address every situation of need.

A person who needs hearing aids loses access to public funding simply for turning 26, and a person with unilateral hearing loss is excluded because their hearing loss affects only one ear.

The need for a hearing aid does not disappear with age, nor does it cease to exist because the hearing loss is unilateral. When a person does not have the prosthesis they need, the consequences can go far beyond hearing difficulties, affecting their communication, social relationships, and well-being, and fostering situations of isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, when a person cannot exercise their right to hear, it is difficult for them to fully exercise their other rights.

Hearing aids are the only prosthetic device in the National Health System's Orthoprosthesis Product Portfolio whose access is subject to age restrictions. Access to the provision should be determined by clinical need, as established through medical prescription, rather than by age or type of hearing loss.

Because a hearing aid is not an accessory resource. For many people with hearing loss, it is essential for communicating, accessing education, working, socialising, participating, and living independently.

Furthermore, for this ability to hear to be functional in real environments, people with hearing loss also need hearing assistive products that, in connection with their prostheses, allow for auditory accessibility and ensure effective access to information and spoken communication.

A matter of equality and non-discrimination

Access to hearing aids and assistive listening devices is an essential condition for equal opportunities to be effective and to prevent discrimination in everyday life.

Twenty years after the Convention, and with the United Nations having just reinforced its international commitment to universal and equitable access to assistive products and technologies, Spain must continue the progress already made.

The Spanish public healthcare system must settle the great debt it owes to people with hearing loss: ensuring access to the hearing aids they need, without discrimination based on age or the type of hearing loss.

FOR THIS REASON, WE DEMAND:

- ✓ **Universal access to hearing aid provision, with no age restrictions.**
- ✓ **Recognition of unilateral hearing loss as a criterion for access to the provision, on equal terms with bilateral loss and subject to clinical assessment.**
- ✓ **A guarantee of the availability in public and private spaces of assistive listening devices, which, in connection with hearing devices, ensure effective access to information and spoken communication in any environment.**

#LADOBLEPÉRDIDA