



## The Irish Message Banking Toolkit



# Recording Messages for Message Banking

## Making good quality recordings

Think about **how** and **where** to record your speech. The aim is to make high quality recordings that sound clear when played on an electronic communication device.

### Recording at home

Set up an area at home to help you to achieve good quality sound recordings. Some things to consider include:

- Deciding whether you prefer to make the recordings on your own or to have someone with you to help with the process.
- Taking some time to familiarise yourself with the voice recorder (e.g. practise starting and stopping recording).
- Using a small foam microphone windshield as this helps to give a smooth sound.
- Keeping the voice recorder/microphone at roughly the same distance from your mouth across all recordings. A tripod stand for the recorder can help with this.
- Avoiding holding the voice recorder/microphone too close to your mouth (sound will be distorted) or too far away (it might not be clear enough). Holding the voice recorder/microphone about a foot from your mouth is generally good.
- Finding an area that has lots of soft furnishings (i.e. carpets, cushions, curtains) as this helps to make the recording less echo-y. Close the curtains if necessary. If you record in a room with hard surfaces (i.e. tiles, floorboards, large windows) the recording may be distorted as sound scatters outwards in all directions distorting the quality of the recording.
- Checking for background noise. For example, make sure the windows are closed, the TV/radio is off and that you cannot hear others in the house.

### Recording out and about

You could carry your voice recorder around with you. This will help you to notice phrases as you use them in conversation. Many people find when they record 'on-the-go' that messages pop into their mind, which can be really useful. However, listen back to them and re-record these messages at home if there is too much background noise and/or you want to improve the quality of the recording.

### Tips for recording

Each phrase/sentence must be recorded complete in one sound file (i.e. don't record a lot of phrases together), otherwise it will not be possible to separate individual phrases for the purposes of using them on an electronic communication device. Therefore you need to ...

1. Press the record button
2. Speak the phrase/sentence
3. Press the button to stop recording

Some of the buttons on the recorder are small so if small finger movements are difficult, think about who you could ask to help you to operate the recorder.



## Equipment needed to record

As technology becomes more and more sophisticated, it is important to plan in order to give yourself the most options in the future. Therefore, aim to make recordings that will be compatible with as many types of electronic communication devices as possible.

Factors to consider and what to avoid are summarised below.

### ✓ Recommended ...

- ✓ Recording messages in a high quality sound file called wave (.wav). This is a versatile format where the files do not lose quality if they need to be converted to suit your selected electronic communication device.
- ✓ Currently the gold standard recording device is a dictaphone-style voice recorder called:

Zoom H<sub>1</sub> Handy Recorder

**or** the revised version

Zoom H<sub>1n</sub> Handy Recorder.



This Dictaphone model is a reasonable price, easy to use and makes wave recordings.

### ✗ Avoid ...

- ✗ Recording MP<sub>3</sub> files as they are compressed files which means the quality can be reduced when transferred onto an electronic communication device.
- ✗ Recording on voice recording apps. While using one of these apps may seem like the simplest solution, the quality of the recording can be extremely variable. If you feel you have no option but to record using a voice recording app, consider the following:
  - Find an app that will record in wave (.wav) format.
  - Make sure the recordings can be removed from the app and transferred off your phone or tablet.
  - Find out where the microphone is on the phone/tablet to maximise the quality of the recording, or consider buying a plug-in microphone that is compatible with it.
  - Make some sample recordings and play them back to check the quality.

## Sourcing a Zoom H<sub>1</sub>/H<sub>1n</sub> Handy Voice Recorder

You can either borrow or buy a *Zoom H<sub>1</sub>/H<sub>1n</sub> Handy Recorder*. Usually it is not necessary for you to buy a recorder if a loan device is available.

### To borrow

- Depending on your medical condition, your supporting organisation may have some recorders available to loan. Your Speech & Language Therapist (SLT) can request a loan on your behalf.
- Your SLT may have devices available to loan within their service.
- Typically a loan timeframe will be agreed with you and you will be asked to sign an *Equipment Loan Form* to acknowledge that you have been loaned the equipment and that you intend to return it by the end of the agreed timeframe.

### To buy

*Zoom H<sub>1</sub>/H<sub>1n</sub> Handy Recorders* cost approximately €150, depending on the cost of postage. They are available online through Amazon.



**For further detail about setting up and operating Zoom recorders, please refer to:**



*Setting up the Zoom H1 Recorder for Message Banking*



*Operating the Zoom H1 Recorder for Message Banking*



*Setting up the Zoom H1n Recorder for Message Banking*



*Operating the Zoom H1n Recorder for Message Banking*