

The multi-professional team

You have been given this leaflet because a hearing test has shown that your child has a permanent hearing loss. This leaflet will tell you about the professionals that work with you to support your child and their hearing.

When we find a permanent hearing loss in a young child we discuss with you, as parents, the best course of action. You and your child will be supported by a multi-professional team which includes Audiology, Education, Speech and Language Therapy, Paediatrics and Ear Nose and Throat. The multi-professional team liaise closely with each other so that your child may gain the greatest benefit. With your consent, the team may at certain stages meet and discuss your child's progress. Monthly multi-professional meetings are held involving all members of the team as well as informal communication about any specific needs.

If you do not wish for any of these professionals to be involved in your child's care you are required to state this in writing.

Audiology

Audiologists will review your child's hearing and any hearing aids they may use.

The Sensory Consortium Service (SCS) (Education Department)

Teachers of the deaf support development of functional use of hearing (and hearing aids), language and communication at home and/or in the educational setting.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)

A speech and language therapist will offer support and advice on speech, language and communication development.

Paediatric Department

A paediatrician will discuss possible causes for your child's hearing loss and offer investigations. For younger children their development will also be assessed.

Ear, Nose and Throat Department (ENT)

An ENT consultant will look in your child's ears and discuss if any further investigations are necessary.

Audiology

Your child will continue to be regularly reviewed in the Audiology Department which will usually involve:

- Finding out more about your child's hearing loss.
- Making specially moulded earpieces for your child's hearing aids if appropriate.
- Fitting hearing aids if appropriate.
- Helping you to manage the hearing aids and helping you learn more about how to communicate with your child.
- Measuring the effect of the hearing aids.
- Meeting to listen to your observations and questions.

Sensory Consortium Service

The Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (SCS) has a specialist team of qualified teachers of the deaf and teachers of the visually impaired working across the 6 unitary authorities who support children at home and in their local schools. This happens even when your child is a baby.

The primary aim is to work effectively in partnership with families, pupils, schools and other providers to empower young people with sensory impairment as learners and citizens within an inclusive community.

The SCS peripatetic teaching and advisory service is available for children and young people with educational needs arising from a diagnosed hearing and/or visual loss. Specialist teachers for the visually and hearing impaired are available to work across the age range in schools and with families. The team offers a range of additional skills above the foundation specialist qualification. These include skills in educational audiology, mobility training, specific learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and curriculum and early years education.

As a service we aim to respond effectively to the specific needs of each child and to provide support in a number of different ways:

- Providing support, information and advice for the family.
- Running two pre-school groups, which any child with a hearing impairment is welcome to attend. Siblings are also welcome to come along and join in the activities.
- All parents of pre-school children are welcome to attend the parent support groups which meet on a regular basis.
- The service offers a programme of workshops and speakers for parents of children across the age range (evenings and Saturdays).

- Provision of visual/hearing stimulation programmes and assessments.
- Liaison with other professionals which may include joint assessments and attending outpatient appointments with the family where requested.
- Liaise with nursery schools on transition into education, provide advice and support and write reports for education providers including statements where appropriate.
- 1:1 teaching in the home or nursery school environment.
- Environmental audits of the home or nursery environment.
- Provision, maintenance, use and evaluation of specialist equipment.

If your child is an infant, a member of the team will be contacting you to arrange a visit within a week, and will discuss with you the type of support that you would find most helpful. For children at school, their school are required to contact the Sensory Consortium Service. Contact details can be found on the 'Useful addresses' sheet at the back of this pack.

Speech and Language Therapy

A specialist service, based in the Audiology Department, is available to families of hearing impaired infants and children.

You will have been asked by the audiologist to give your consent for our team to receive an alert about your child's diagnosis. We will contact you to explain the service that we offer and guide you to how and when to access the service (referral to us at the time your child was diagnosed. We will contact you to explain the service we offer and agree with you an appropriate date and time for us to meet you and your child). We aim to work closely with both the Audiology staff and the Sensory Consortium Service and, when an assessment is required, we may meet you at one of your appointments/visits with them.

We aim:

- To develop natural communication.
- To establish good listening skills as a basis for language acquisition and speech development.
- To assess and monitor your child's communication development.
- To advise you and demonstrate how you can help your child to develop attention, listening and understanding/expression of language.
- To answer your questions and inform you about speech, language and communication development.

Our input will vary according to you and your child's needs. It may involve working with you and other family members or carers. The aim is for you to communicate with your child in a way that helps him/her to make sense of the language he/she hears and sees and to provide good opportunities to develop his/her communication skills.

It may involve you attending some regular individual or group sessions with your child to focus on particular speech and language skills that he/she is felt to need help developing as identified by our assessments.

We will outline to you how regularly our input is needed and make appropriate appointments with you. We may visit you at home or ask you to attend the clinic.

Community Paediatrics

Following the identification of a permanent hearing loss at any age your child will be referred to a community paediatrician. The paediatrician's main role is to try to find out the cause of your child's hearing loss, and also to identify any associated health or developmental problems. It can be difficult to determine the cause with certainty, but investigations will be offered. Some of these investigations may need to be done urgently before the appointment (and your audiologist will discuss this with you in the first instance), but most can be deferred until you have had a full discussion about the tests. Investigation of possible causes may be an ongoing process, and tests may be offered further in the future depending on research advances or any emerging symptoms.

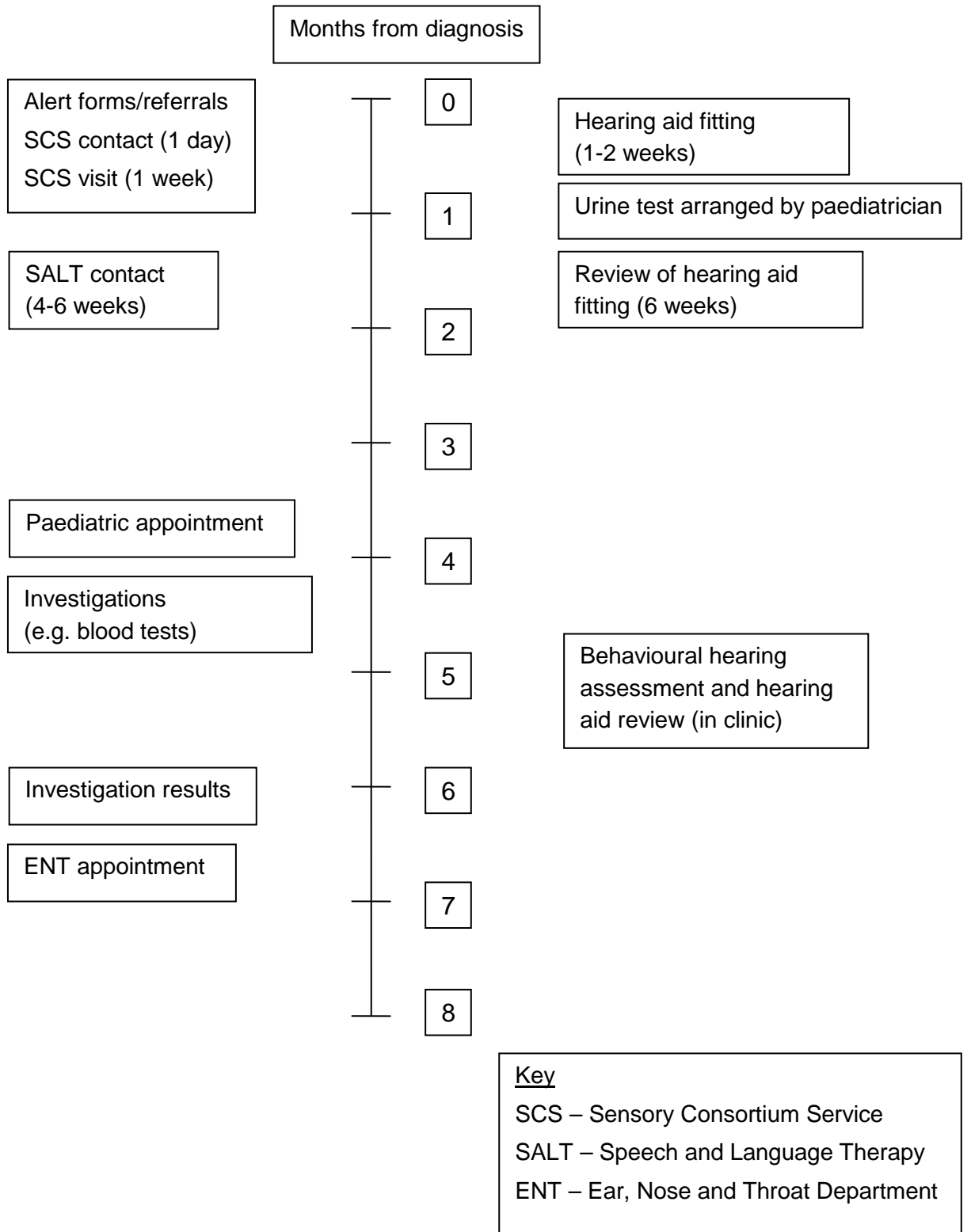
The initial assessment takes place at Dingley Specialist Children's Centre and lasts around one and a half hours. It includes a full history of your child's health and development as well as a detailed family history, a developmental assessment if your child is less than five years old and a full medical examination.

At the end of the assessment the paediatrician will discuss the findings and suggest some investigations to try to identify an underlying cause for the hearing loss. The investigations are different in each individual case, but may include blood and urine tests, and scans, most of which will be arranged for a later date.

The paediatrician will also refer your child to the ophthalmology department even if there are no specific concerns. This can sometimes help with determining an underlying diagnosis and is important because any child with a hearing loss will rely more on their vision to communicate. It may be recommended that other referrals are made, for example to a clinical geneticist, or for you to have your own hearing tested.

Your child may continue to be followed up at Dingley Specialist Children's Centre, usually at six monthly or annual appointments until starting school, and thereafter if a cause has not been identified (warranting further investigation in the future) or if your child has other associated health problems. However, in some cases regular routine follow-up may not be necessary.

Appointment/contact timeline following diagnosis of hearing loss in the newborn period (Subject to variation depending on individual/family circumstances)



Useful addresses and sources of further information

Audiology Department

Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading RG1 5AN

Tel (Answerphone): 0118 322 7076 Fax: 0118 322 7075

Email: audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net

Website: <http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/audiology.htm>

Reading Deaf Children's Society

Alison Bell Tel: 07764 879764

Email: reading@ndcsgroup.org.uk

The National Deaf Children's Society

Ground Floor South, Castle House, 37-45 Paul Street, London, EC2A 4LS

Information: 020 7490 8656 Fax: 020 7251 5020

E-mail: ndcs@ndcs.org.uk Website: <http://www.ndcs.org.uk>

Helpline: 0808 800 8880

E-mail: helpline@ndcs.org.uk

Sensory Consortium Service

Children's Services, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF

Tel: 01628 796786 Fax: 01628 796936 Textphone: 01628 796785

Email: Sensory.Consortium@rbwm.gov.uk

For further information about the Trust, visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in other languages or formats (e.g. large print, Braille or audio), please contact the Audiology department.

Reviewed: November 2017

Review due: November 2019