

Your hearing assessment

If you have not been seen by the Audiology Clinic before and would like a hearing assessment please see your GP and ask for a referral.

At your assessment appointment:

At this appointment you will be seen by an audiologist (hearing specialist). We will discuss the problems which you are having with your hearing. We are likely to ask you about your general health and any related problems which you may have such as tinnitus or problems with your balance (it would be helpful if you could complete the enclosed form and bring this with you to your appointment).

A test of your hearing detection thresholds will be carried out. The test will give the audiologist a picture of the level of sounds that you are able to detect. You will wear headphones and listen to sounds over a range of frequencies (250 to 8000 Hertz); these are the frequencies most relevant to hearing everyday environmental and speech sounds. The audiologist will explain the test results to you and discuss the options available to you. Should you choose to be fitted with a hearing aid, an impression may be taken of your ear. This will involve the audiologist inserting a foam plug into your ear canal and then putting some putty in your ear to take the shape. The process is completely painless and will enable a custom made ear piece to be made for your ear.

What is a hearing aid?

A hearing aid makes sounds louder so that you can hear them. Hearing aids are available in different shapes, sizes and types. However, all hearing aids work in a similar way. A built-in microphone picks up sound, which is processed electronically inside the hearing aid. The resulting 'signals' are then passed on to the receiver (like a tiny loudspeaker) where they are converted back into louder sounds that you can hear.

Do I have to pay for it?

The NHS provides a hearing aid free on loan. The hearing aid is yours as long as you need and use it, but it does remain the property of the NHS.

All the batteries will be provided free of charge and your hearing aid will be repaired or replaced if the hearing aid is not working. You may be charged for the hearing aid, if it has been damaged through misuse or if it is lost.

How will hearing aids help me?

Hearing aids cannot give you perfect hearing. However, they can help you hear everyday sounds that you have been missing, e.g. the doorbell or clock ticking. You should find it less difficult to follow what people are saying, making conversation easier. Watching people's faces should also help you to follow conversation. As a result, your confidence in talking to people should improve.

If you have tinnitus (hissing, buzzing or other noises in your ears or head) it is likely to be reduced when you use a hearing aid. This is because you are no longer straining to hear.

Will hearing aids make my hearing loss worse or make my ear/s lazy?

If you use a hearing aid it will not make your hearing worse. Some people are also worried that by using hearing aids it will make their ear/s lazy. By wearing aids the opposite happens, as your ear/s are able to hear sounds that maybe you would have previously missed.

Two hearing aids or one?

When you see your audiologist to have your hearing aid(s) fitted, you may be given the choice of having either one or two, depending on the type of hearing loss you have. Here are some advantages to having two aids.

Advantages to having two hearing aids are:

- Better speech discrimination, especially when there is a lot of background noise present, e.g. a noisy street or shop.
- Better ability to localise sounds (tell where sounds are coming from).
- Better overall sound quality, as the hearing aids do not have to be at such a high overall volume.
- A feeling of sound being balanced in both ears. Being able to make the most of both ears, if you have a hearing loss in both of them.
- Being able to hear quiet speech better-
- If one stops working, you will still have the other working while the broken one is repaired

There may also be other appropriate options such as auditory training (training your brain to hear better in noisier situations) or hearing therapy for advice and support.

Other support

We may also offer a referral for an assessment from Social Services Sensory Needs Team. They are able to offer advice regarding additional equipment such as special doorbells.

You are very welcome to bring someone to your appointment with you should you wish. We are happy to arrange an interpreter should you require one. We are also able to have written information translated should you require it.