



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Newborn hearing screen

Important information for
parents

Your baby has been offered an appointment for a hearing screen. These are offered to all babies and this leaflet will explain more.

Why is it important to attend?

Your baby has been offered a newborn hearing screen. This screening is offered to all babies born or resident in England to check their hearing soon after birth.

Most babies have normative ranges of hearing, but some are born with hearing loss that may not be obvious at first. Early hearing screening helps identify this as soon as possible so babies and families can receive the right support.

Early identification gives babies the best opportunity to develop speech, language and communication skills and empower them to reach their full potential.

Hearing screening is time-critical

The newborn hearing screen and any further audiology assessments are time-critical. The tests work best when babies are very young and are more challenging to perform on older babies.

Because of this:

- Screening should ideally be completed before your baby is 3 months old (12 weeks corrected age)
- Our aim is to complete the hearing screen within your baby's first 4 weeks (corrected age) wherever possible as this reflects the service performance.
- If further testing is needed, an audiology appointment is usually offered in less than 4 weeks.

Attending your appointment helps ensure any hearing concerns are identified and supported as early as possible.

What the research shows:

- Around 2–3 babies in every 100 (2–3%) do not show a clear response on the first screening test
- Around 1–2 babies in every 1,000 are born with permanent hearing loss in one or both ears
- This increases to around 1 in 100 babies who have spent more than 48 hours in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)
- About 1 in 15 babies (7%) referred to an audiology clinic are found to have permanent hearing loss
- 90% of babies with hearing loss are born to families with no history of deafness

Before your appointment

We may phone or text you 1–2 days before your appointment to:

- Confirm that you can attend
- Ask a few questions about possible risk factors for hearing loss

If you cannot attend your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible so we can rearrange it.

 Newborn Hearing Screening Team **0118 322 7556**

On the day of the appointment

To help the screening run smoothly:

- Please allow extra time for travel and parking
- Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your appointment time. This helps keep waiting areas calm and comfortable for babies and families
- Bring your baby in a car seat or pram
- Bring any feeding or changing items you may need
- Bring your baby's Personal Child Health Record (Red Book)

The screening works best when the environmental noise is as low as possible and babies are settled or asleep, so feeding your baby

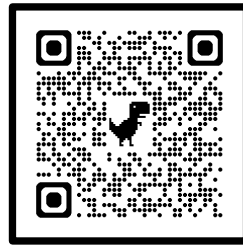
shortly before the appointment can help optimize screening conditions. Sometimes more than one appointment may be needed to complete the screening.

Subsequent paragraph

The information ‘*Screening tests for you and your baby*’ that was discussed with you by your midwife during your pregnancy, explains why newborn hearing screening is important. Further information is available below or on the NHS website. Go to www.gov.uk and search for newborn hearing screening or use the QR codes or links below.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby>



<https://youtu.be/Ruz0e6xg10w>

If you have any questions or concerns about attending with your baby, please call us on **0118 322 7556** to discuss.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Local manager Newborn Hearing Screening Team, February 2021

Reviewed: May 2026

Next review due: May 2028