



Patient Information

Hearing aid assessment and hearing aid fitting

Why might I need hearing aids?

There are several reasons why your hearing may not be as perfect as it has been. It may be temporarily down due to a cold, ear infection or wax. A more permanent hearing loss may have many different causes such as genetics, noise exposure, disease or age.

We now know that our hearing starts to change from our late 40's. By our mid 50's we may be noticing that we aren't hearing our family or the TV as well as we used to. Or we may find that sounds aren't as clear or loud as they used to be.

If you do have a hearing problem, we know that hearing aids may be helpful and give you back some of those sounds that you are missing. Whilst they aren't perfect, and you may still miss the occasional thing they can certainly make a big difference to your quality of life.

Moreover, we are very lucky in the UK that hearing aids, batteries and hearing tests are still free of charge on the NHS.

What preparation do I need to do?

Your ears need to be free of wax in order to proceed with a hearing assessment and hearing aid fitting. Your GP, at the time of your referral to us, hopefully will have looked in your ears to check if they are free of wax. If you feel this wasn't done, then your ears should be checked for wax by the nurse/GP at your local surgery and any necessary wax management procedure carried out prior to your appointment with us.

This is very important because if there is too much wax in your ears, we will not be able to carry out the procedures necessary to provide you with hearing aids, until the wax has been cleared.

If you have hearing aids already, please bring them to your appointment, along with any documentation.

Can I bring someone with me?

If you would like to be accompanied by a friend or relative or carer, we would welcome this. It is important too for those around you to know what your hearing is like and how they can help you. The adage that "two brains are better than one" is true, having that second person there will help with remembering the information that we will give you.

What if they are in care/nursing home?

If this is an appointment for a family member that is living in a care facility, then we ask that they come with a member of staff too, and their Care Plan. Their Care Plan will tell us of any issues that we may need to know, that may impact on their hearing care. Also, we can write in their Care Plan and let the staff know what type of hearing loss and hearing aid care they may need.

Who will provide the SHC Audiology NHS Adult Hearing Service?

All our audiologists are highly trained. They will be registered with the Health Professions Council or the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists; which are the organisations responsible for ensuring that all audiologists are competent and appropriately trained.

SHC Audiology is IQIPS accredited. IQIPS is a professionally-led programme with the aim of improving services, care and safety for patients undergoing physiological science service tests, examinations and procedures. UKAS manages, delivers an assessment and accreditation against IQIPS standards to NHS hearing care providers.



What should I expect to happen in my Assessment appointment?

An assessment appointment normally lasts for about 45 minutes, but we advise you to plan for an hour just in case more time is necessary.

The audiologist will ask you questions about your hearing such as: What difficulties do you have hearing? When you feel, it is most important for you to be able to hear clearly? Have you ever had any problems with your ears? How would you feel about wearing hearing aids? Whether you have tinnitus and if it is bothersome?

They will explain the hearing test procedure to you and you will have the opportunity to ask questions too. You will be asked to give verbal consent to the procedures necessary to assess your hearing, and this will be recorded in your notes.

You may find that some of the procedures carried out during your visit may tickle or feel slightly strange on occasion, but they are entirely safe, and should/will not cause any discomfort.

What happens during the test?

The audiologist will look in your ears using an otoscope to make sure your ears are okay. You will then be asked to put on some headphones and listen to sounds of different pitches and levels of loudness. The second part of the hearing test involves putting a headband on with a vibrating pad to listen to sounds. You will be asked to press a button each time you hear a sound.

The audiologist may also do another test where they make the sounds louder to find out the level they become uncomfortable for you to listen to them. Sometimes other further tests may also be carried like speech discrimination testing or tympanometry. The audiologist will explain these to you should you need them.

All these tests will help the audiologist identify if you have a hearing problem and the level of your hearing loss. The tests can/may also show up any problems with the middle ear or ear drum. Information from these tests will be used to programme your hearing aids should you need them.

When will I know the results of the hearing test?

As soon as the tests are completed, the Audiologist will discuss the results and a copy of the hearing test will be provided. If appropriate, you will be offered a hearing aid for each ear. The Audiologist will discuss the options of hearing aid styles, eg. open style or earmould which would be made to fit your ears.

If there are problems with your ears, we may write to your GP and ask them to refer you onto an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist (ENT). However, in most cases, we can continue with booking a hearing aid fitting appointment whilst waiting for an ENT evaluation.



What happens next?

Developments in technology sometimes make it possible to combine the hearing aid fitting and assessment appointment, if the level of your hearing loss is appropriate for an open hearing aid fitting. Not everyone benefits from this approach; and your eligibility for this type of combined appointment needs to be known prior to assessment appointment in order for the correct amount of time (90 minutes) to be set aside. This might be determined by your hearing being screened prior to your first visit with us. However, this type of screening may not yet be available at your GP surgery; in which case your assessment and fitting will need to be carried out in separate appointments. Your next appointment will be arranged with you whilst you are at your first visit.

What happens at the Hearing Aid Fitting appointment?

Your hearing aid fitting appointment normally last for about 1 hour; but we advise you to allow for a 1 hr 15 minutes in case more time is needed.

At this appointment, the audiologist will use a computer to programme your hearing aids, so that they will suit you and give the best results. They will also use a piece of equipment that does a Real Ear Measurement, this is to check that when your hearing aid is inserted it produces the right levels of sound in your ear.

You will be then shown how to use and care for your hearing aids and how to get the best from them. SHC audiology will provide all the continued support, maintenance and repair services you require to make the best use of your hearing aids; and you will be informed about arrangements for these services at your fitting.

During your Hearing Aid Fitting appointment, you will receive the following written information:

- Information about how your hearing aids work.
- Information explaining about follow up, maintenance, repair and ongoing support services.
- How to contact our Referral Management Centre to request replacement batteries, tubing and appointments.
- Information about additional services, support, organisations and equipment that may be useful to you.
- Information about what happens and what to do if you lose your hearing aid(s). There may be a charge. Your audiologist will discuss this with you at your appointment.

What happens after the Hearing Aid Fitting?

To check how you are getting on and to see whether there any further adjustments are needed, or any problems with your hearing aids, the audiologist will offer you a follow up appointment to take place between 3 – 8 weeks after your fitting appointment. If it's appropriate you may be offered a follow up appointment that will be carried out by telephone and this will be arranged at a convenient time for you. Your follow up appointment will be arranged with you whilst you are at your fitting appointment.

What if I can't find the answers to my questions in this leaflet?

If you have any questions not answered in this leaflet, you may find the answers to any additional queries, on our website: www.shcaudiology.co.uk or call us on 0800 622 6282.

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