



## Patient Information

# Hearing aid assessment and hearing aid fitting

### Why might I need hearing aids?

There are several possible causes of hearing loss. A temporary hearing loss may be due to a cold, wax or an infection. A permanent hearing loss may be due to genetics, noise exposure, disease or age. More than 50% of people over 60 have age-related hearing loss, or presbycusis, and may benefit from using hearing aids. Your GP (family doctor) is able to refer you directly to SHC Audiology services for a hearing aid where all your care and hearing aids will be free to you in the same way as any other NHS service.

### What preparation do I need to do?

Your ears must be clear of wax in order to proceed with the hearing assessment and hearing aid fitting. Your GP, at the time of your referral to us, will have looked in your ears to check that they are free from wax. If you feel that this was not done, your ears should be checked for wax by the nurse at your local GP 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.

Please bring any old hearing aids you have with you to your appointment, whether you use them or not, along with any paperwork or documentation that you have about them.

#### During your visit, you will be asked:

- What difficulties you have hearing in everyday situations?
- When you feel it is most important for you to be able to hear clearly?
- How you feel about wearing hearing aids?

It would be very helpful if you could consider what your answers might be to these questions before your visit.

### Can I bring someone with me?

If you would like to be accompanied by a friend, relative or carer we would welcome this. It can be very helpful to have someone with you to help with remembering all the information we will give you.

### What are Mobile SHC Audiology NHS Adult Hearing Services?

In order to bring your Hearing Aid Services as close to your local community as possible, some of our services are provided in a mobile unit that will be situated next to the building where you have been asked to wait. This building will be identified in your appointment letter.

The mobile units have been designed to be comfortable, quiet, well lit and wheelchair accessible.

### Who will provide the SHC Audiology NHS Adult Hearing Service?

You will see a highly trained specialist called an Audiologist. They will be registered with the Health Professionals Council or the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists which are the organisations responsible for ensuring that all audiologists are competent and appropriately trained.

### What should I expect to happen at my assessment appointment?

This appointment normally lasts for 45 minutes but we advise you to plan for one hour in case more time is necessary. The audiologist will ask you about your hearing, explain the procedure to you and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. You will be asked to give verbal consent to the procedures necessary to assess your hearing which will be recorded in your notes.

The procedures carried out during your visits to the Hearing Aid Services may tickle or feel slightly strange on occasion but they are entirely safe and do not cause any discomfort.

### What happens during the test?

The audiologist will look in your ears using an otoscope. You will be asked to put on headphones and listen to sounds of different pitches and levels of loudness. During the second test you will put on a headband 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 make the sounds louder to find out the level they become uncomfortable for you to listen to them. Sometimes further tests may be carried out. You may be asked to listen to words and repeat what you hear or have a soft tip held next to your ear for a few seconds and feel a change of air pressure in your ear canal.

All these tests will help the audiologist identify if you have a hearing loss and the level of your hearing loss. The tests can also show up any problems with your eardrum or middle ear. Information from the tests is used to programme your hearing aids.

### **When will I know the results of the assessment?**

As soon as the tests are completed, the audiologist will talk to you about the results and discuss with you the options you have. You will be offered two hearing aids if these are likely to be of more help to you. If you decide to try hearing aids, impressions will be taken of your ears to make ear moulds that are custom-made to fit your ears.

### **What happens next?**

Developments in technology sometimes make it possible to combine the hearing aid fitting appointment with the assessment appointment if you have the level of hearing loss appropriate for an open ear hearing aid fitting. Not everyone can benefit from this approach, and your eligibility for this type of combined appointment needs to be known prior to your assessment in order for the correct amount of time to be set aside (90 minutes). 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 be carried out at 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?**

The hearing aid fitting will normally last for one hour but we advise you to plan for one hour and 15 minutes in case more time is necessary. At this appointment the audiologist will use a computer to programme your hearing aids so that they suit you and give you the best results. The audiologist will also use equipment to check that when your hearing aid is inserted, it produces the right sound levels in your ear. You will be 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 best use of your hearing aids and you will be informed about arrangements for these services.

### **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 Care Coordinator to request replacement batteries and tubing
- Where you can get NHS batteries in your local community
- A NHS Hearing Aid Record Book so that you can get batteries
- A copy of your hearing test (audiogram) for your information
- Information about additional services, organisations and equipment that may be useful to you.

### **What happens after the hearing aid fitting?**

To check how you are getting on and see whether there are any further adjustments needed or any problems with your hearing aids, the audiologist will offer you a follow up appointment to take place approximately 5 to 10 weeks after your fitting appointment. If appropriate, you may be offered a follow up that will be carried out by telephone and arranged at a convenient time for you.

Your follow up appointment will be arranged with you whilst you are at your hearing aid fitting appointment.

### **What if I can't find the answer to my question in this leaflet?**

If you have questions not answered in this leaflet, you may find the answers in other SHC Audiology patient information we have given you. Alternatively please contact us on 0800 622 6282 or write to us at the address below.

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