

Further information

We are here to support you and your child. Should you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

Department of audiology and hearing therapy
Telephone: **023 8082 5124**
Email: **rshaudiology@uhs.nhs.uk**

Level A
Royal South Hants Hospital
Brintons Terrace
Southampton
SO14 0YG

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.

Hearing aid services for children

It has been suggested that your child may benefit from hearing aids.

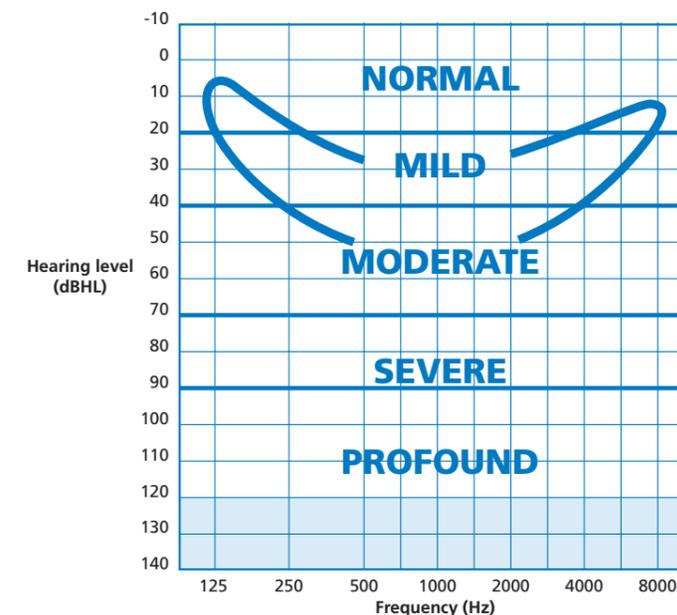
You are not alone: one in seven people in the UK have a hearing loss of some degree. Between one and two babies in every 1,000 are born with a hearing loss. Some children develop a hearing loss later on in life.

Many children are given a key contact within audiology. You will normally see this person during your first few visits to the clinic and they will be your main contact for advice. As your child gets older they may be seen by different members of staff in the clinic.

Your key worker is:

Hearing tests

There are many different hearing tests for children. Each test has been developed for children of a specific age. Results from these tests are placed on a chart called an audiogram. The chart shows the quietest sound that is heard at different pitches (frequencies).



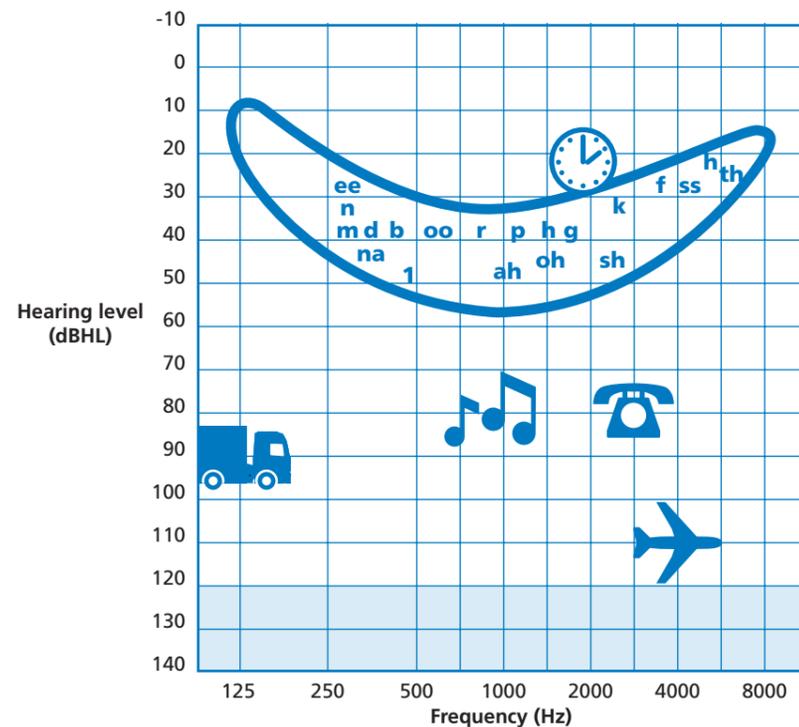
This chart shows the different degrees of hearing loss, described as:

- Normal – all speech sounds are heard.
- Mild – may have difficulty hearing softly spoken speech. There may be a need for a hearing aid to give clarity.
- Moderate – most speech sounds are either heard very quietly or are missed. The use of a hearing aid should make speech easier to hear.
- Severe – loud sounds and speech will be heard at close range only. Speech at a normal level will not be heard. Hearing aids will greatly benefit speech development.
- Profound – limited speech will be heard. Without the use of hearing aids speech will not develop. Another form of communication may be useful, such as sign language.

Patient information factsheet

Speech is made up of lots of different sounds. Some are high pitched, like /sh/ /t/ /th/ and /f/. These are responsible for the clarity we hear in speech. Other sounds are low pitched, like /oo/ /m/ /n/ and /aa/. These give us more volume, or loudness.

We have placed your child's hearing levels on the chart below to give you an idea of what they can hear.



What happens next

Impressions

Every person's ear is a different shape. We therefore make custom fitting earmoulds to deliver sound from the hearing aids into the ear canal. To do this we need to take an impression (cast) of the ear. This procedure is simple and takes just five minutes. The ear impression is sent away to a laboratory and made into an earmould.

As your child grows, we will take new impressions, to account for the new shape of their ear. This may be as often as every few weeks when they are babies, but much less frequently as they get older. Many teenagers have their earmoulds changed on a yearly basis.

Education

We will offer you a referral to your local specialist teacher advisory service.

If you agree, they will contact you directly to provide information, advice, support and training to parents, carers and school staff.

Questionnaires

Feedback about how your child is hearing at home is important. We may give you a questionnaire to complete at home and bring with you to your next appointment.

Fitting hearing aids

We will:

- discuss appropriate options with you
- set up the hearing aid/s to take into account your child's individual hearing levels and needs
- possibly perform more tests to check how your child is hearing while they are wearing their hearing aid/s
- explain how a hearing aid works and how to care for it.

We may also give you a kit to help you care for your child's hearing aid/s.

Getting used to hearing aids

Each hearing aid is set up to provide the best possible access to speech sounds.

Hearing aids cannot restore normal hearing, but with consistent use and practice they will help your child hear sounds more clearly.

It is important that as a parent you display a positive attitude towards hearing aids.

It may take some time for your child to adjust to wearing their hearing aid/s. We sometimes recommend building up use gradually. The best place to start is in a quiet, familiar setting. Your child may at first be very aware of louder sounds such as a door closing, water running and cutlery in the kitchen. The sound of their own voice will also be different. If they become tired of the hearing aid/s, allow them to stop and try again later. Gradually build up the amount of time they are wearing their hearing aid/s and the different places they use them in. A good time for them to adjust to the hearing aid/s is when reading bedtime stories or when playing with one adult involving lots of talking.

We understand that parents have to get used to hearing aids too, so we provide as much support as you need in the first few weeks and months.

Hearing aids should become part of your child's daily routine, just like getting up, getting dressed and brushing their teeth.

Eventually children will use their hearing aids all day, every day, forgetting they are wearing them at all.

Follow up

Initially, we would like to review your child every three to six months. We can monitor their progress and build up information about their hearing ability. Eventually they will only require yearly reviews, with short appointments in between if new earmoulds are required.

Listening tactics

The help and support given by family and friends can greatly affect the success of using hearing aids. Try to remember your child will still hear and understand more easily when you are close by and facing them. In school they will need to sit at the front of their class, nearer to the teacher.

Remember to speak clearly to your child and at a normal volume level. Gain their attention before speaking and reduce any background noise.

Try not to speak too loudly or shout, as this can make speech harder to understand.