

Patient information factsheet

Your child has been referred for a hearing aid assessment

We have given you this factsheet because your child has been referred to the audiology department for a hearing aid assessment. It explains what to expect at your child's appointment and provides more information on hearing aids. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

What happens next?

We will send your child an appointment letter for a hearing aid assessment at the audiology department, which is next door to the ear, nose and throat (ENT) department on level A. We will usually offer your child an appointment within six weeks of their referral. If the appointment time we have offered your child is not suitable, please telephone us to rearrange it.

What happens at the appointment?

Your child's appointment will last approximately 45 minutes. During the appointment we will assess your child's hearing, even if this has been recently tested at your child's ENT or community audiology appointment. This is because we want to make sure that we have the most up-to-date hearing results before deciding on the best way to treat your child.

Will my child be given hearing aids at the next appointment?

It takes a minimum of two appointments to have hearing aids fitted.

Hearing aids are only suitable for children with a significant hearing loss. If we think your child has a significant hearing loss, we will take earmould impressions during your child's assessment appointment. We will then arrange a date for your child to return (usually two to three weeks later) to have their hearing aids fitted. For most children, we will arrange to fit two hearing aids unless one ear is unsuitable for this, or if there is a particular wish to only start with one aid.

If your child's hearing levels have improved since they were first referred, hearing aids may not be suitable. This is because hearing aids act as amplifiers (devices that increase the volume of sound) rather than restoring perfect hearing levels. This means that background noise can be overamplified and may make it more difficult for your child to hear. An earmould inserted in the ear can also dull your child's natural hearing, which then needs to be overcome by the hearing aid. If your child has reasonable hearing levels, they are likely to manage better in busy situations using their natural hearing rather than with an earmould and hearing aid.

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What happens if my child's hearing is not suitable for hearing aids?

We understand that fluctuating (changing) hearing levels can be very frustrating for parents and children. Please be assured that we will not discharge your child if there are significant concerns about their hearing ability. We will make an appointment for a few months' time to assess their hearing again. If you have any concerns before this, you are welcome to contact us and ask for an earlier review. If your child's hearing level drops significantly during this time, we can proceed with hearing aid management.

What if hearing aids are fitted and then my child's hearing gets better?

In the case of glue ear, we often see improvements in hearing, especially over the summer months. We will regularly review cases of fluctuating hearing so that we can advise on whether hearing aid management is still suitable or make alterations to the hearing aid settings. If you think your child's hearing has improved and/or if loud sounds are causing them discomfort, please contact us for advice, as we may suggest your child stops using the hearing aids for the time being. We may also be able to suggest some alternative hearing aids which will be more appropriate for your child.

What will the hearing aids look like?

All children will be fitted with behind-the-ear hearing aids, which will usually be a silver colour. If your child's hearing loss is permanent and they need hearing aids for long-term use, they may be allowed to pick a colour of their choice. For most children, we will take an impression for an earmould and then they can choose whether to have this made in clear plastic (with a small picture inserted into it), or in a colour or mixture of colours. For some children with mild hearing loss (usually when a child is in the upper years of junior school or in senior school), we may offer a thin tube and dome fitting rather than an earmould.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Audiology and hearing therapy department

Level A

The Royal South Hants Hospital

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Southampton

Hampshire

SO14 0YG

Telephone: **023 8120 2997**

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Useful links

www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/childhood-deafness/hearing-aids

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit [**www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport)