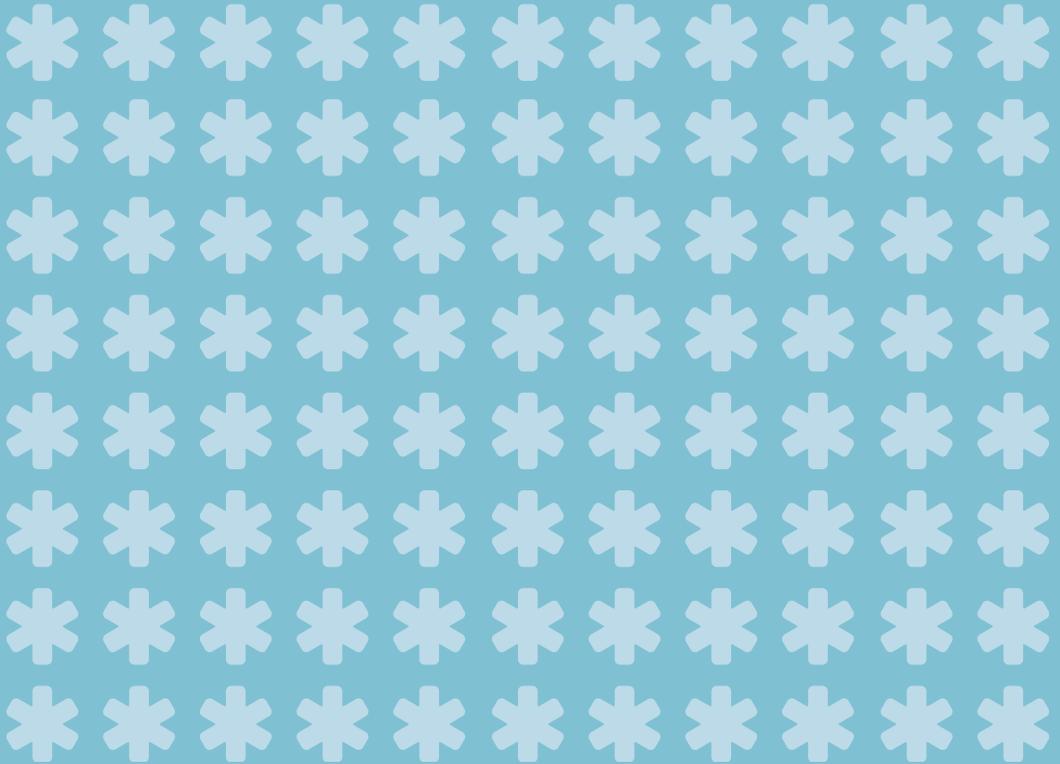


Service information guide

My Child's Hearing- Sensorineural hearing loss



Welcome to B&NES and Wiltshire Children's Community Audiology Services

Our team of specialist paediatric audiologists and experienced clinical support staff will assess and care for your child, supported by our administrative team.

Your child has been diagnosed with a sensorineural hearing loss. This booklet contains information and advice to help you support your child with their hearing. Some families experience a range of feelings at this time. As well as providing practical guidance, the health and education professionals involved in your child's care can advise you about how to access support for your emotional health and wellbeing, through your Health Visitor, GP and support groups. If you have any further questions or would like information on local support, please ask your audiologist.

Copies of this leaflet can be downloaded for family and friends to read on our website:

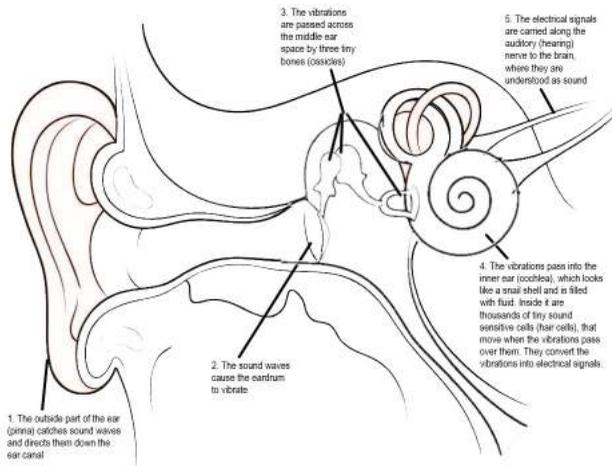
www.wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/audiology

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) can provide additional practical and emotional support:

t: 0808 800 8880

w: www.ndcs.org.uk

How do we hear?



To hear a sound, different parts of the ear (outer, middle, and inner ear) and the brain must all work well together.

Sensorineural hearing loss- what does this mean?

Sensorineural hearing loss is a permanent hearing loss caused by an issue within the inner ear (hair cells in the cochlea) or the auditory nerve. Your child's hearing loss may affect both of their ears (**bilateral**) or one ear (**unilateral**). There are different degrees of sensorineural hearing loss- **mild, moderate, severe, and profound**.

Your audiologist will be able to explain your child's hearing levels. Your child may hear some sounds better than others. For example they may have a moderate hearing loss for most sounds and a severe hearing loss for certain sounds. A picture audiogram can help to show how your child is likely to hear speech and environmental sounds. Picture audiogram are explained in the resource "Understanding your child's hearing tests" at www.ndcs.org.uk

My notes:

My child has a bilateral/ unilateral hearing loss

Left ear - mild/moderate/severe/profound hearing loss

Right ear- mild/moderate/severe/profound hearing loss

What hearing checks are carried out?

Hearing tests measure how the different parts of the ear respond to sound. The response to sound is measured at different frequencies (pitches). We may use different methods such as speakers, headphones and a bone vibrating headphone to measure your child's hearing.

Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) Testing- If your child is a young baby and has been diagnosed following referral from the newborn hearing screen, further testing may be needed and this will ideally be carried out before your baby is 8 weeks old. It is important that your baby is asleep for this type of test and sometimes more than one session is needed to complete the testing. Hearing aid(s) may be fitted and programmed using the information from the ABR. Your baby's progress will then be carefully monitored until they are developmentally ready for assessment of their behavioural responses to sounds.

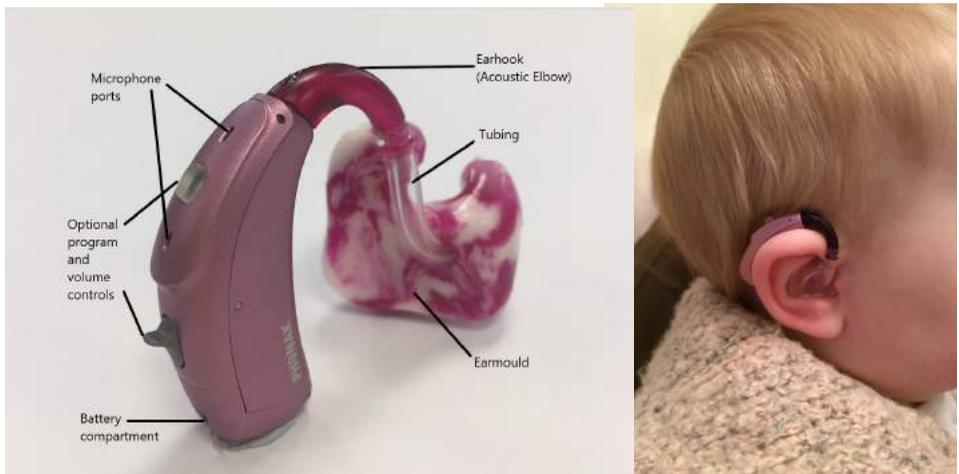
Behavioural testing- The age at which your child is developmentally ready for this type of testing will vary, but is often from 8-10 months old. Your child will be tested whilst awake, alert and sitting up. We have lots of experience in assessing children's hearing and are able to distinguish genuine responses to sound from "checking" responses. We only record genuine responses to sound and will use information from each test to add more detail to your child's diagnosis and adjust their individual management plan.



When a permanent hearing loss has been confirmed, it is really important for us to regularly check your child's hearing so that any changes in hearing levels are quickly identified and acted upon. Also, regular hearing tests help us to build a more complete picture of your child's hearing levels and individual needs.

Does my child need hearing aids?

Depending on the results from the hearing assessment, hearing aids (or one hearing aid) may be recommended. Hearing aids are designed to help your child have the best possible opportunity to experience sounds in the world around them. They aim to increase the level of sound your child hears, and to make speech sounds clearer. There are different types of hearing aid for different kinds of hearing loss. For sensorineural hearing loss, it is likely that your child will be fitted with the style of hearing aid pictured below:



Your audiologist will discuss with you whether hearing aid(s) may be beneficial for your child and their individual needs. This will continue to be reviewed throughout their childhood.

Hearing aid care- earmould impressions, hearing aid fittings and maintenance are managed by your local team.

If you decide that your child will try hearing aid(s), the first step is to take impressions of your child's ear(s) so that earmoulds can be made. A convenient time and date for this to be done will be arranged with you by your local hearing aid audiology team. They will be based either in Bath, Swindon, Salisbury or Taunton, depending on where you live.

Earmould impressions: Special putty is put in your child's ear which will set after a few minutes and then be removed. This process doesn't cause any pain to your child but you may need to hold them still as it is essential that an exact impression is taken to ensure that the resulting earmould fits well. Typically your child will need new ear moulds every two weeks when they are first born, but these intervals may be extended to several months between appointments as your child gets older.

Hearing aid fitting: Once the ear mould is returned, a convenient appointment will be arranged with you to fit the hearing aid(s). Your child will be fitted with digital hearing aid(s) which are programmed to suit their individual hearing loss. Your local hearing aid audiology team will let you know the appointment details.

My Notes:

My child's hearing aid fitting date, time and location

NB: Contact details for the your local hearing aid audiology Team are on the inside back page of this leaflet

How can I support my child with wearing their hearing aid(s)?

To get maximum benefit from hearing aid(s), ideally they should be worn for **all** waking hours. As well as supporting speech and language development, hearing aids will help your child's general development in lots of ways as they explore the world around them.

It is important to make sure that your child's hearing aid(s) are in good working order. Your child may not be able to tell you if there is a problem. Your audiologist can show you how to:

- o **Check** and change the batteries
- o **Listen** to the hearing aid using daily checks so that you are familiar with how it should sound
- o **Clean** the hearing aid(s) and earmould
- o **Identify** feedback (whistling) which can occur when the earmould starts to get too small or is not in the ear correctly.
- o **Troubleshoot** problems and provide contact details for repairs and impressions.

Ensuring your child keeps their hearing aids in can be difficult at times, but your audiologist can provide further advice and strategies such as:

- o **Routine-** just as your child gets dressed in the morning, they need to wear their hearing aids. Make them part of the daily routine
- o **Distraction-** It is natural for your child to be curious about their ears and hearing aids. Sometimes taking the hearing aids out can become a way to get your attention. When your child is calm, distract them with something they like (e.g. a book or toy) and try to put them in again
- o **Devices-** Hearing aid clips, caps, headbands and special tape can help to keep the hearing aids safely in their ears

How can I make hearing easier for my child?

It is really important that you communicate as effectively as possible with your baby or child. This will support them in their general development and in developing speech and language.

Tips to help with a sensorineural hearing loss

- Get your child's attention before speaking by touching them or saying their name
- Turn off the TV or music when you are talking to them- background noise makes it harder to hear and listen
- Get close to your child, talk face to face, and use facial expressions
- When reading a book out loud, sit so your child can see your face and the book- add signs/point to pictures
- Sing and learn songs with your child- whatever their age!
- Speak clearly but try not to shout. Shouting may make your child think that you are angry and can make it harder to lipread.
- For toddlers and older children, keep instructions clear, short and simple
- Listening hard may be tiring for your toddler or older child and they may need breaks from concentrating. Try to spend some quiet time talking and playing with your child- this will help reassure them
- Your child may be more reliant on visual information. It is important that their eyesight is regularly checked
- If your child's hearing is not the same in both ears they may find it harder to tell where a sound is coming from, e.g. locating your voice, or (for older children) locating traffic when crossing a road
- Encourage your older child to blow their nose when they have a cold to help reduce congestion
- Tell everyone caring for your child about their hearing difficulties and share these tips

What educational support is available for my child?

All newborn babies identified as having a permanent bilateral hearing loss will be offered support from the Hearing Team based within the Sensory Support Service that covers the area where you live. This is part of the Education Service and the Hearing Support Teachers (HST) within it are qualified Teacher's of the Deaf (ToD). Your local team can provide information and help on many issues concerning hearing loss in children, including language and communication support, hearing aids, parenting a deaf child and educational support.

With your consent, your audiologist will arrange to refer your child to you local team who may allocate a specific Hearing Support Teacher (HST) to contact you soon after diagnosis to see if you have any questions or queries. The team may provide long term support throughout your child's early years and education.

For unilateral hearing losses and older children diagnosed with permanent bilateral hearing loss, with your consent, your audiologist will make contact with your local team on your behalf. The Sensory Support Service will determine the amount of support your family requires, based on your child's hearing loss and individual needs.

More information for the team that covers the address where you live in is available on the websites below:

Bath and North East Somerset: **www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk**

Somerset: **www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/Services/3325**

Wiltshire: **www.wiltshirelocaloffer.org.uk**

My notes:

My child's hearing support teacher is

Contact details:

What is the cause of my child's permanent hearing loss?

You will be offered the option of an appointment with a specialist paediatrician in our aetiology/ investigations clinic, to investigate the possible cause of your child's hearing loss.

There are different investigations available and you will be guided through these by the paediatrician. You do not have to decide on this straightaway but can instead raise this with your audiologist during any review appointment. It is not always possible to identify the cause of a hearing loss.

Further information about causes of childhood hearing loss and the medical tests that can be used to help diagnose the cause of permanent hearing loss can be found on the National Deaf Children's Society website:

www.ndcs.org.uk

My Notes:

Consult your GP if your child has an ear infection or ear that is completely blocked with wax. They can provide treatment & onward referral if needed

Virgin Care Children's Community Audiology carry out new hearing assessments and regular monitoring of hearing. Contact details on back of this leaflet



Local ENT department for ear, nose and throat consultations and surgery.

Bath
Bristol
Swindon
Salisbury
Taunton

Hearing aids (Bath)

Audiology Dept, Royal United Hospital
Bath. BA1 3NG

t: 01225 824035

e: ruh-tr.paediatricaudiology@nhs.net

Hearing aids (Swindon)

Audiology Dept, Great Western Hospital
Swindon. SN3 6BB

t: 01793 604065

e: gwh.audiology.dept@nhs.net

Hearing aids (Salisbury)

Audiology Dept, Salisbury District Hospital
Salisbury. SP2 8BJ

t: 01722 429335

e: Sft.audiology@nhs.net

Hearing aids (Taunton)

Audiology Dept, Musgrove Park Hospital
Taunton. TA1 5DA

t:01823 342187

e: hearingaid@tst.nhs.uk

Get in touch

Children's Community Audiology

Room 17, Ground Floor

Midford House, St Martin's Hospital

Kempthorne Lane

Bath. BA2 5RP

t: 01225 394536

e: vcl.bathneswiltschildrenciaudiology@nhs.net

w: wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/audiology

