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216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Audiology Department

Patient Information

Assistive listening devices

Document history

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Assistive listening devices

Hearing aids can be a great help but other devices, known as assistive listening devices may also help with the following situations such as:

- using telephones (landline and mobile)
- watching television or listening to the radio
- Alerting devices (doorbell, telephone ringing, baby monitor, smoke alarm)
- Listening to talks, lectures and in meetings
- Listening in the theatre, cinema and other events

In some cases equipment can be provided by social services or can be privately purchased. Further advice and some demonstrations are available at the hospital. Please contact the audiology department.

Telephones

Hearing on the telephone is a common problem. Usually sound quality and volume can be improved by holding the receiver to your hearing aid, above your ear. The positioning is very important.

If you continue to have difficulty hearing or you have interference it may be worth considering buying a special phone designed for people with hearing difficulties. These phones can have the following helpful features: volume control, a speakerphone and may be compatible with loop systems.

For people who cannot hear on the phone it is possible to use textphones or the typetalk service (where the message is relayed on a screen for you to read).

Social Services

Social services can often assess individuals for equipment to help with hearing difficulties. The services which can be offered depend on your local social services. If you would like to be referred you can either contact your local social services department directly or ask the audiology department to make a referral for you. Usually you will complete an assessment over the telephone or arrangements will be made to visit you in your own home.

Cambridgeshire Sensory Services

Telephone: 0345 045 5221
Textphone: 01480 376743
Fax: 01480 498066
Text: 07765 898732
Email: referral.centreadults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Web: www.yourlifeyourchoice.org.uk

Norfolk Sensory Support Unit

Telephone: 0844 8008014
Textphone: 01603 763585
Email (link): online.norfolk.gov.uk/enquiry
Web: www.norfolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Social Services

Telephone: 0845 023023
Email: customer.first@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk
Web: www.suffolk.gov.uk/CareAndHealth

Essex Social Services

Telephone: 0845 603 7630
Web: www.essexcc.gov.uk

Hertfordshire Social Services

Telephone: 01438 737400
Textphone: 01438 737359
Email: hertsdirect@hertsc.gov.uk
Web: www.hertsdirect.org/caresupport

Equipment purchase

The following organisations produce catalogues which include a range of assistive listening equipment. The RNID Solutions catalogue and Connevans catalogue are both available in the department or by contacting the organisations directly:

Action on Hearing Loss (previously RNID)

Address: Freepost, 1 Haddonbrook Business Centre, Fallodan Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough, PE2 6XH

Telephone: 01733 361199

Textphone: 01733 238020

Email: solutions@hearingloss.org.uk

Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Connevans

Address: Bridge House, 1 Nutfield Road, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3EB

Telephone: 01737 247571

Textphone: 01737 644016

Email: info@connevans.com

Web: www.connevans.info

Please check the terms and conditions with the company before ordering and check for postage charges. Certain items are eligible for a refund of VAT if you are D/deaf or hearing impaired. You can claim this by completing a form with your order. See the catalogues for more details.

Further information

Please contact the audiology department for further information and equipment demonstrations. Equipment demonstrations are available from some hearing help sessions (such as CAMTAD in Cambridgeshire). See our leaflet on hearing help sessions for details.

Mobile phones

Always try a new phone with your hearing aid to check it works well. If you experience interference or frequently use a phone you may find it helpful to use an accessory which connects the phone to the hearing aid via the loop system. Even if you cannot hear well enough to make calls you can still send text messages (SMS).

Television and radio

Many people can happily listen to the television or radio using their normal hearing aids but often a clearer sound can be obtained using devices which send the sound to your hearing aid or through headphones. Standard headphones can work but these often turn off the TV speakers so nobody else can hear the TV. Alternatives include TV listeners or loop systems which plug into the back of the television and send the sound to your hearing aid (on the loop setting) or to a cordless headset.

All digital televisions and analogue televisions with teletext can receive subtitles where these are broadcast. To watch subtitles on analogue television press the text button then 888. For digital television either press the subtitles button (where available) or use the menu system to switch subtitles on.

If you are buying new equipment, particularly for recording subtitles check that it has the features you need. If possible see if you can have a demonstration or trial.

Portable music players

You can connect hearing aids to portable music players using the loop system or direct input wires with a suitable hearing aid connector (called a shoe). There are even solutions if you only have one hearing aid or if you can only hear in one ear.

Alerting devices

Devices are available to alert you in the home to things like the doorbell, telephone ringing, a baby alarm, smoke alarm or to help you hear if someone you care for needs assistance. The devices can alert you by making a louder sound, vibrating or by flashing lights. They are often portable. Paging systems are available to alert you to several different warnings.

Smoke alarms

Smoke detectors have loud alarms but they may not be loud enough to wake you from sleep. Smoke alarms are available which have flashing lights and a vibrating pad which goes under your pillow. Fire services offer a free home safety visit and can install appropriate smoke alarms without charge. The audiology department can make a referral on your request or you can contact fire services directly by telephone: 01480 444666 or online www.fire.gov.uk

Outside the home

Cinema

Loop systems, headsets and captioned showings are often available. Check with your local cinema for details.

Theatre

Loop systems, headsets, signed and captioned showings are available. Contact your local theatre for details and mention your needs when booking tickets.

Loop systems

Loop systems are special listening systems which transfer sound directly to your hearing aid, reducing background noise. Loop systems are available in public buildings such as meeting rooms, lecture theatres, places of worship, shop and bank counters. Switching the hearing aid to the loop programme can help you hear the person talking into the system better whilst cutting out the background noise around you. See your hearing aid instruction booklet for details of how to use the loop programme (sometimes called telecoil or "T").



Sign for loop system

Personal listening devices

Personal listening devices can help you hear in meetings, lectures, in the car and many other situations. They work by placing a microphone near the person you are listening to. The sound is sent to the hearing aid either through a wire or through a wireless system. The wireless systems tend to be more expensive. This equipment is usually purchased privately but if the equipment is used for work ask about the 'Access to work' scheme.