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Introduction

Congratulations on getting your hearing aid(s), the first step towards better hearing. There is no doubt that, with practice, it will make a real difference towards your quality of life.

Please take the time to read this guide as it will help you to get the best out of your new digital hearing aid. It will remind you of what your audiologist explained at your fitting appointment, and also contains extra information about how to use and look after your aid.

You will also find tips that you can use to make it easier to understand what other people are saying. There is also contact information for useful organisations and support services.

If you have any difficulties that are not solved by this guide, your local audiology service is there to help you.
Your new hearing aid

All hearing aids supplied by the NHS are highly advanced, digital aids. Your hearing aid has been programmed electronically to take into account your individual requirements. This begins with your audiologist performing a hearing assessment.
Types of hearing loss

Audiogram of familiar sounds

Please note:
People often have hearing thresholds spanning two or more of these classes of hearing loss in different pitches / ears.

- Mild
- Moderate
- Moderately-severe
- Severe
- Profound
Mild
May have difficulty following speech, especially in noisy situations. This type of loss is often noticed by family first rather than the patient.

Moderate
Often has difficulty following speech and misses other quiet noises. Amplification is very successful for this loss, but the patient also needs to use good hearing tactics.

Moderately severe
Unable to hear speech even in quiet surroundings and may not hear general noises such as traffic unless they are loud. Amplification is very successful for this loss, but the patient also needs to use good hearing tactics. Lip-reading classes could benefit people with this hearing level.

Severe
Unable to hear most sounds unless they are very loud. Amplification is often useful, but the patient will also need to rely on good hearing tactics. Lip-reading classes would also be useful for people with this hearing loss. Patients in this category may also use sign language and watch sign assisted programmes.

Profound
Will need to wear appropriate amplification technology (e.g. hearing aids, cochlear implant, FM) in order to hear conversational speech.
If your hearing is suitable, you will be offered digital hearing aids. This means that they are programmed with a computer to a prescription suitable for your loss.

Either an Ear Mould or LifeTip has been prescribed for you, depending on your hearing loss.*
A hearing aid cannot give you perfect hearing but they should help you to hear everyday sounds like clocks ticking, birds singing, etc.

The aid(s) should also make speech a bit clearer for you, so you don’t have to listen as hard. It should help you hear when people are speaking to you and give you more confidence.

In noisy places the background noise will still be there as it is for someone who has normal hearing. You will probably find that it is helpful to watch people’s faces in noisy places like high streets and restaurants.

You may still find it difficult to follow what people are saying and, if both ears are impaired, wearing two aids may help you to focus better on what you want to listen to.
Frequently asked questions

Will I have normal hearing with hearing aids in?
No, the hearing aids can only work with the hearing that you have left. It will sound strange to start off with, but with perseverance it will sound more natural. It should take the strain out of listening though.

Will my own voice change by wearing hearing aids?
It is very common that your own voice may sound slightly different to what you are used to hearing, this is because you have been used to hearing your own voice with a hearing loss. When the aid is initially fitted the sound of your own voice can sound a little strange as it is now being amplified. Your own voice may appear a little quieter to others.

What if I don’t like the sound of my own voice?
To start with, your voice may sound unfamiliar to you but after 2-6 weeks this should subside with regular use of the hearing aids. For some patients this may take longer than 2-6 weeks.

Is there anything else that could help, as well as a hearing aid?
Yes, additional equipment for the television, telephone and doorbell is available. Please ask the Audiology Department for advice.
Are there any listening situations that I will still have difficulty hearing, even with my hearing aids?

Your hearing aids are programmed to automatically adjust to suit the environment that you are in, however there are limitations to the technology. Sometimes manual programs can be added to help specifically with environments that you find especially hard to hear in. These options can be discussed with your audiologist.

How do I get used to wearing a hearing aid?

By wearing the hearing aids you are teaching yourself to listen again. When your hearing deteriorates it takes time to get used to all the new background noises and hearing speech can be strange to start with. Just like glasses, it takes time to get used to the physical fit. The more you wear the hearing aids, the more natural they will feel.
I’ve had one hearing aid for a long time and now I have been given two, one for each ear. What will this feel like?

The newly aided ear may take a while to get used to wearing a hearing aid, compared to the ear which has had a hearing aid previously. Similarly to when you received your first hearing aid, your brain needs time to adjust to hearing from this side again as it is learning to use both ears together. To start with it may sound less natural but please persevere with it until your hearing aid review appointment to allow for this adjustment.

I’ve been given two hearing aids – should I wear them both together?

Wearing two hearing aids gives a much more balanced, more natural sound. It will also be easier to locate where sounds are coming from when both hearing aids are worn. The hearing aids have been programmed as a pair and if you only wear one aid the settings may be incorrect for your hearing loss.

How often should I be wearing the hearing aids?

Ideally all day every day – the more they are in the ears, the better. Sometimes it may not be obvious how much you can hear with it but persevere as much as you can. Remember, you never know when you might need to hear something, for example, the doorbell or telephone, etc.
Please note:
The hearing aids should not get wet. During showering, heavy rain, at the hairdressers etc., they should be removed to prevent damage. If the aid is damaged through negligence a charge may be incurred.
Getting started with your hearing aids

Turning ON/OFF

Turning the hearing aid **ON**
- close the battery compartment

Turning the hearing aid **OFF**
- open the battery compartment

You may have an alternative ON/OFF on your hearing aid. Ask your audiologist for further details:

Changing the battery

1. Open the battery compartment.

2. Remove coloured sticker from new battery, place battery in drawer with + symbol on battery + side up. (You should only remove the protective sticker when you actually use the battery).

3. Close battery door

Your battery size is:

```
312 13 675
```
With the controls you can, for example, adjust the volume or switch hearing programs. Your hearing aids may have a push button or rocker switch. Your audiologist has assigned your desired functions to the controls.

**Volume control**

You may have a volume control on your hearing aid. Your hearing aid has an automatic volume control which adjusts depending on the listening situation you are in.

You can use the rocker switch to make additional volume adjustments to make the sound more comfortable. Press up to increase volume and press down to decrease volume.

*Please note:*

- **When the volume control is at maximum or minimum levels, the hearing aid will indicate this with beeps. If you continue to press the volume button, the volume will not increase or decrease any further.**
- **To reset to your prescription volume, turn the aid off and on again.**
- **Batteries last for up to 2 weeks. Beeping will sound 40 minutes before they run out. Do not wait for the battery to completely run out, change at this time – or both batteries if there are 2 hearing aids.**
- **Battery and tubing postal service are available from Southport and Ormskirk Audiology Departments.**

*Please refer to the 'controls' section of your User Guide for your specific controls configuration.*
Programs

☐ To change program press the push button briefly.

☐ If using a rocker switch, changing the program may be a brief press of the up or down rocker switch or long press if the rocker switch is configured to change both volume and program change.

☐ Everyday Listening
Upon switching the hearing aid on, program one is active. This program automatically and continually adjusts the digital features of the hearing aid for you, to ensure that speech is comfortable and audible from all directions.

☐ Noisy Environment
This program reduces noise from behind the listener and focuses more on speech from the front.

☐ Loop System/Telecoil
This program allows the listener to hear sound directly from a microphone e.g. banks, theatres, supermarkets, churches or anywhere you see this symbol:

Please refer to the 'controls' section of your User Guide for your specific controls configuration.
Using the telephone

1. Leave your hearing aid in your ear and working normally.

2. Put the telephone receiver to the hearing aid towards the top of your ear as shown in the picture bottom right. This will make the voice of the person calling louder for you.

- Telephone program
  You may prefer a certain volume when using the telephone. Ask your NHS Provider to configure a telephone program.

  • Switch to the telephone program whenever you are on the phone.
Your programs

Depending on how your audiologist has programmed your hearing aid(s) will determine what program you select. When the program button is pressed once, you will hear two beeps indicating a move onto program two. If the program button is pressed again, you will hear three beeps and so on.

1. **Everyday Listening**
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

**Please note:**

- **To reset your hearing aid to the original program (1), press the program button until only one beep is heard or alternatively to reset all settings, turn the aid off and on again.**
- **Do not use the loop setting (3) unless you are in the vicinity of a loop system. If the loop setting is active at any other time, the amplified sound will be reduced.**
Remote controls

A remote control may also be used to change the volume and hearing programs. The easyPocket™ remote control is available as an optional accessory for all Octiv models.

These can be purchased from your Audiology Department.

*If you think an easyPocket would assist you please ask your audiologist for further details about how you can obtain such a device, or enquire at reception.*

easyPocket
Ear mould hearing aids

Putting your hearing aid in

1. Raise the aid to your ear as shown. Tuck the top point of the mould into the fold of your ear.
2. Put the bottom half of the mould down into your ear.
3. Press the mould piece firmly into your ear.
4. You may need to use your other hand to stretch your ear to ease fitting.
5. Hook the aid over the top of your ear. Turn the hearing aid on.
Cleaning and maintenance of your ear mould

1. Carefully remove the ear mould from the hearing aid.
2. Carefully wash the ear mould under a running tap.
3. Carefully dry the ear mould either with a soft cloth or a gentle shake. To dry the tubing either use an air blower or leave to dry naturally. Please do not reconnect the ear mould until completely dry. Please ask your audiologist for more information about a cleaning kit which you may purchase from the Audiology Department.
4. Carefully reconnect the ear mould to the hearing aid.
5. Ensure the ear mould and hearing aid are connected correctly. Align correctly by placing the ear mould curve to the inside curve of the hearing aid.

Please note:

- When the tubing becomes discoloured – contact the Audiology Department and they will replace it for you.
- Do not wash your hearing aid; a wipe over with a baby wipe is sufficient.
- Your ear mould should be serviced every 6-9 months.
How to retube your ear mould

1. Pull old tubing out and keep for later.
2. Cut end off new tubing into a taper.
3. Push tapered end into ear mould and feed through the hole. If there are two holes in your ear mould, use the top hole.
4. Feed through until bend reaches ear mould and tube is in an upright position.
7. Cut tapered end close to the ear mould

8. Line up with old tubing and cut...

9. ...to same length

10. Reattach hearing aid to ear mould

11. Curve of the ear mould should line up with curve of the hearing aid
LifeTip hearing aids

Putting your hearing aid in

1 Lift the hearing aid over the back of the ear to secure it into place.

2 Hold the LifeTip between the thumb and forefinger and insert the LifeTip into your ear canal. Gently work it into position to make sure it is firmly in your ear.

3 Take the anchor of the LifeTube and flick it into the bowl of your ear to improve the retention of the LifeTip. Turn the hearing aid on.

Sometimes a LifeTip is not appropriate or successful and the audiologist may decide to replace it with a custom made plastic ear piece, called a Life Mould.
Cleaning and maintenance of your LifeTube/Tip

1. Carefully wipe the LifeTip with a soft damp cloth.
2. Carefully unscrew the LifeTube from the hearing aid.
3. Remove the LifeTip from the LifeTube. Insert the cleaning wire into the LifeTube from the end that has been unscrewed from the hearing aid.
4. Wipe the cleaning wire with a soft cloth.
5. Secure the LifeTip to the LifeTube. Carefully screw the LifeTube to the hearing aid to reconnect.

Please note:
- Do not remove LifeTip from the LifeTube.
- LifeTubes will need to be replaced every 3-4 months or sooner if it becomes kinked, twisted or difficult to clean. Spare ones are provided by the Audiology Department.
- For removal of any blockages, a cleaning wire can be inserted in to the end of the LifeTube which attaches to the hearing aid and fed through to the LifeTip. Insertion into the LifeTip could push a blockage further in to the tubing.
Communication tactics

Speak clearly and use normal lip movements, natural facial expressions and gestures.

“Get my attention”
Before you start to speak to me, make sure you are in the same room as me and you have my full attention.

“Face me”
Always turn and face me when you talk. It helps me pick up any visual clues you might give me.

“Don’t cover your mouth”

Use plain language and don’t waffle.

“Get to the point”
Here are some tactics your family and friends can use to help you hear more easily. It may be helpful to introduce them to your family and friends.

Keep your voice at a normal level. Shouting can distort speech making it more difficult to understand.

“Don’t shout”

It is easier to hear when there is good lighting and not too many noises and distractions.

“Find a suitable place to talk”

If you are experiencing difficulties communicating with a particular person or in a specific situation, the best thing to do is explain these tactics to them as it’s likely they are not aware. Once they understand this they can help make the situation easier for you.

“Don’t speak too fast”

If I don't understand what you are saying, try and say it in a different way and slow down.
The patient journey

Hearing assessment and fitting within 5 weeks (36 working days) of referral

Follow-Up within 10 weeks of hearing aid fitting

Aftercare includes batteries, repair and advice fitting

After care
Your hearing aid is expected to remain appropriate for several years. If your needs change, assessments are available through your Audiology team. Please contact us on 01704 705230 or 01695 656708 to arrange an appointment.
Referred by GP into Hearing Rehabilitation Service

Assessment

Fitting

Follow Up

After Care
General notes on safety
(For further and more comprehensive safety information please refer to your product user guide.)

Choking hazard posed by small parts.
• Keep batteries, hearing aids and accessories out of children’s reach.
• If swallowed, consult a physician or hospital immediately.
• If infants, small children or disabled persons need to wear hearing aids ensure adequate supervision.
• Keep the battery compartment locked.

Important
Regularly check the condition of your hearing aid and consult your NHS audiologist if it fails to operate correctly or the case becomes damaged or deformed.

Leaking batteries damage hearing aids
• Turn the hearing aids off when not in use to preserve battery life.
• Remove battery when aids are not in use for a prolonged period of time.

Batteries contain harmful substances that pollute the environment.
• Do not throw away batteries into household refuse.
• Dispose batteries according to national regulations or return them to your NHS audiologist.
Your hearing aids are sensitive to extreme heat, high humidity, strong magnetic fields, x-rays and mechanical stress.

- Do not expose your hearing aid to extremes in temperature or humidity.
- Do not leave them in direct sunlight.
- Do not wear them in the shower or while applying make-up, perfume, aftershave, hair spray or suntan lotion.
- Do not wear your hearing aid when you are exposed to short-waves, a strong magnetic field, a high frequency field or x-rays.
- Do not place your hearing aids in a microwave oven.

**WARNING!**

Connect the audio input only to equipment which conforms to the safety requirements of IEC 60065.

**Hazard of explosion**

Do not use your hearing aids in areas where there is danger of explosion e.g. mining.

**Please note:**

- Check the condition and operation of the hearing aid regularly.
- Consult your NHS audiologist if the casing is deformed.
What to do if the aid stops working

Has your hearing aid stopped amplifying sound?

• Turn the aid off and on again. You may have accidentally altered the program or volume. This should reset the aid.
• Try a new battery. Battery power can vary between 1-2 weeks.
• Try separating the tubing from the aid and cup the aid in your hand. The aid should whistle:
  - If it whistles, check the tubing and mould/LifeTip for signs of blockage. You may need to contact the Audiology Department to change tubing/LifeTip.
  - If it does not whistle, attend the open access clinic in your area.

Does your hearing aid whistle when it is in your ear?

• Check that the ear mould/LifeTip is inserted correctly and fully into your ear.
• You may have excess wax, which can cause your hearing aid to feedback. See your GP about removal.
• Check your tubing for discolouration or cracks. The tubing may need to be changed.
Remember to:

1. Turn OFF and ON
2. Check for blockages
3. Change the battery

If none of this solves the problem, take the aid back to your audiology service to see if it needs to be repaired.
A drop-in service is available at both Southport and Ormskirk Audiology Departments for minor hearing aid repairs and for the collection of batteries, cleaning wires and tubing.

**Opening Times**

**Southport**
- Monday: 9am – 11:30am and 1pm – 4pm
- Tuesday: 9am – 11:30am and 1pm – 4pm
- Wednesday: CLOSED
- Thursday: 9am – 11:30am and 1pm – 4pm
- Friday: 9am – 11:30am and 1pm – 4pm

CLOSED between 12 noon and 1pm

**Ormskirk**
- Monday: 9am – 12 noon
- Tuesday: 9am – 12 noon
- Wednesday: CLOSED
- Thursday: 9am – 12 noon and 1pm – 4pm
- Friday: 1pm – 4pm

**Please note:**
These clinics can be busy at times and are on a first come first served basis. So please be prepared to wait. Please remember to bring your battery card as this will speed up your visit.
Booked repair appointments
A limited number of booked repair appointments are available please phone the Audiology Department to enquire about availability.

What is a repair?
- Check hearing aids are working correctly
- Servicing and cleaning hearing aids
- New tubes
- Minor adjustments
- New earmoulds
- Replacing faulty hearing aids
Most repairs take 5-10 minutes.

What is NOT a repair?
Re-programming, which includes making changes to;
- the volume
- the tone
- the programs
If you attend the repair service and require re-programming, a separate appointment will be needed.

Hearing aid enquiries
If you are unsure what to do please contact the department for advice on either;

01704 705230 or 01695 656708
Battery collection service

Batteries can also be collected from the following locations:

**Sefton**

Southport Centre of Health & Wellbeing,
44-46 Hoghton Street, Southport
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

Ainsdale Centre of Health & Wellbeing,
164 Sandbrook Road, Ainsdale, Southport
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

Churchtown Health Centre,
137 Cambridge Road, Churchtown, Southport
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

Nugent Care Society, 23a Stanley Street, Southport
Wednesdays 10am – 12 noon

**Formby**

Formby Clinic, Philip’s Lane, Formby
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

Boots Pharmacy, 17-19 Elbow Lane, Formby
Monday – Friday 8:30am – 7pm and Saturday 9am – 12 noon
**West Lancashire**

**Sandy Lane Health Centre**, Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

**Ashurst Health Centre**, Lulworth, Skelmersdale
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

**Birleywood Health Centre**, Digmoor, Skelmersdale
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

**Burscough Health Centre**, Stanley Court, Lord Street, Burscough
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

**Tarleton Health Centre**, Gorse lane, Tarleton
Monday to Friday during normal opening times

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU TAKE YOUR BATTERY BOOK OR BATTERY CARD**
Sources of further information

**Action on Hearing Loss**

**Information:**
- Telephone: 0808 808 0123 (freephone)
- Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (freephone)

**Head Office:**
19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL
- Telephone: 020 7296 8000
- Textphone: 020 7296 8001
- Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk
- Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

**British Tinnitus Association**

**Information:**
- Telephone: 0800 018 0527 free of charge within the UK
  0114 250 9922 national rate within the UK
  +44 (0)114 250 9922 outside the UK

**Head Office:**
Ground Floor, Unit 5, Acorn Business Park, Woodseats Close, Sheffield, S8 0TB
- Email: info@tinnitus.org.uk
- Website: www.tinnitus.org.uk
Hearing Link

Information:
Hearing Link is here to give you advice, information and support. Please contact our Helpdesk by phone.
Telephone: 0300 111 1113

Head Office:
27-28 The Waterfront, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 5UZ
SMS: 07526 123255
Email: enquiries@hearinglink.org
Website: www.hearinglink.org/contactus

SENSE

Information:
For deafblind people
Telephone: 0845 127 0066 or 020 7520 0972
Textphone: 0845 127 0066 or 020 7520 0972
Fax: 0845 127 0061

Head Office:
101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG
Email: info@sense.org.uk
Website: www.sense.org.uk

Siemens Hearing Instruments
Website: www.siemens.co.uk/hearing
Audiology Dept
Southport and Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport Merseyside PR8 6PN
Tel: 01704 705230
01695 656708
Hospital Switchboard: 01704 547471
e-mail: soh-tr.audiology@nhs.net

Audiology Dept
Ormskirk & District General Hospital
Wigan Road, Ormskirk
West Lancs L39 2AZ
Tel: 01695 656708
01704 705230
Hospital Switchboard: 01704 547471
e-mail: soh-tr.audiology@nhs.net

Social Care
Provides assistive listening devices and identifies other useful services.
Tel: 0151 934 3982
e-mail: hsc.sefton.gov.uk

Southport & District Centre for the Deaf
Organises social/group activities, parties and coffee mornings for hard of hearing people.
Please contact Peter Mowat or Mildred Taylor:
Tel: 01704 537001

Aintree Tinnitus Support Group
Hosts talks and presentations on a range of topics related to tinnitus and hyperacusis. You are welcome to bring a friend/relative to the meetings.
Tel: 0151 529 0328
Tinnitus website: www.tinnitus.org.uk

Deafblind UK
Offers support for people with progressive sight and hearing loss.
Tel: 01733 358100
e-mail: info@deafblind.org.uk

HearHere Nugent Care Society
Offers lip-reading classes and communication awareness courses.
Tel: 01704 534102
e-mail: Hear.here@nugentcare.org.uk

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