

The information in this document contains general descriptions of the technical options available, which do not always have to be present in individual cases and are subject to change without prior notice.

The required features should therefore be specified in each individual case at the time of conclusion of the respective contract.

# Your hearing journey - information guide.

Booklet One.

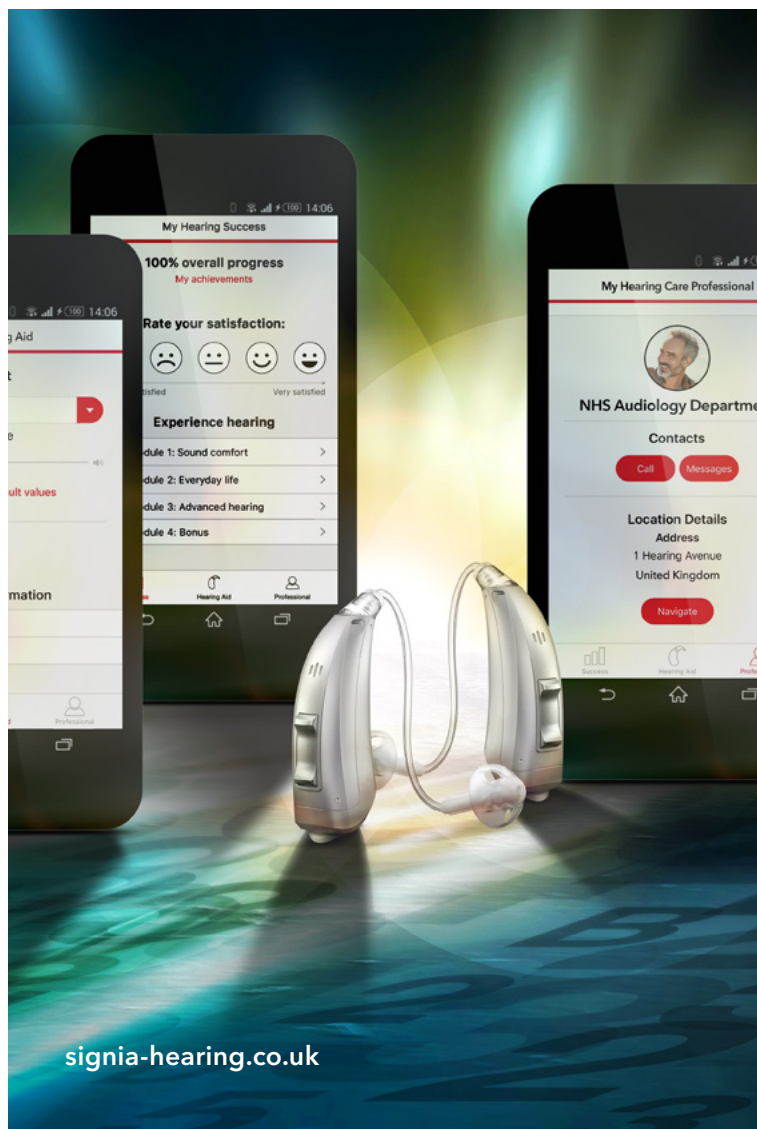
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# Section 1

## Introduction

This booklet has been sent to you along with your appointment for the audiology clinic. The booklet provides information about what to expect at your appointment, all about your ears and hearing loss as well as how best to manage a hearing loss.

## Hearing loss indicators

Hearing loss can develop at any time. Most often, it is gradual and painless as your hearing declines slowly and you may not realise for several years that it is affecting you. At first it may be barely noticeable; in fact it may be that your friends or family notice this before you do.

### Can you relate to any of the following?

People seem to mumble and not speak clearly.

- People always say that the volume on my TV or radio is too loud.
- I miss visits and calls from people because I didn't hear the doorbell or telephone ring.
- I have trouble following conversations in crowded or noisy places.
- I frequently mishear and ask people to repeat themselves.
- My friends and family say that I have a hearing problem.
- People tell me that I speak too loudly.

**Have you experienced any of these situations? If so, there is a chance you have a hearing loss.**

### You have been referred

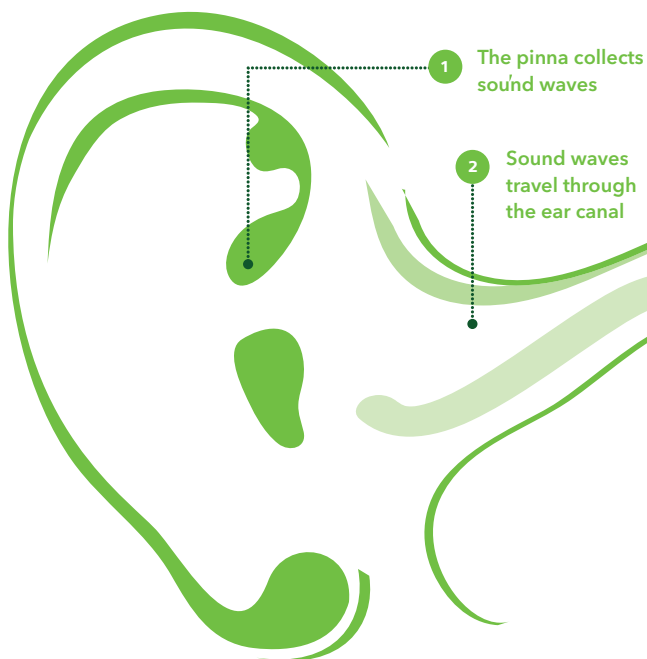
Your GP has referred you to us so we can take a look at your ears and hearing. The reason for your referral will vary but is likely because there is some concern, either from your GP, yourself or even your family and friends about how well you hear.



## Section 1

### Outer ear

Collects airborne sounds



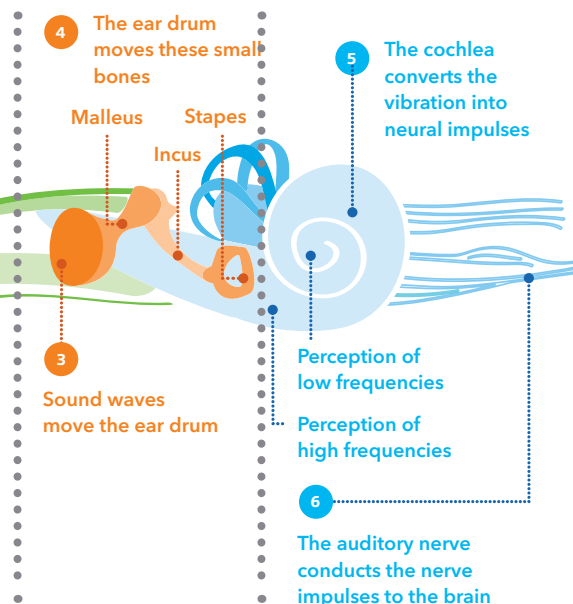
1 The pinna collects sound waves

2 Sound waves travel through the ear canal

### Middle ear Inner ear

Conductive mechanism

Conversion into nerve impulses



4 The ear drum moves these small bones

Malleus Incus Stapes

3 Sound waves move the ear drum

5 The cochlea converts the vibration into neural impulses

Perception of low frequencies  
Perception of high frequencies

6 The auditory nerve conducts the nerve impulses to the brain

## Knowing your ears

To understand hearing loss, it helps to understand how we hear. Your ear is an amazing organ that, very simply put, turns sound waves in the air into information in your brain.

What we call 'sounds' or 'speech' are actually just 'sound waves' transmitted through the air. (1 & 2) The outer ear collects the sound waves and delivers them to the (3 & 4) middle ear which makes the ear drum and the tiny bones vibrate. (5 & 6) These vibrations move the fluid in the inner ear, which in turn moves tiny hair cells and stimulates the nerve to send messages to the brain.

## Causes of hearing loss

So why does hearing loss happen?

There are many factors that may affect your hearing, including:

- In many cases hearing loss is just part of the aging process.
- Long-term exposure to noise.
- Hereditary factors.
- Illness/infection.
- Reaction/side-effects to medication.
- Injury.
- Blockages of the ear, such as wax.



# Section 2



Take a look at the examples opposite, which shows a number of situations where hearing loss can be putting a strain on relationships. Are any of these familiar to you? By thinking about your own daily communication it can really help to focus on where you need the most help with your hearing.

## Effects of hearing loss

As we get older, our hearing deteriorates. This is usually a gradual process.

No matter what the cause, hearing loss affects each person differently. Most people find that background noise prevents them from hearing speech clearly in social situations and others can struggle to hear a particular family member's voice; no two people are exactly the same in what they can and cannot hear.

One of the ways that people manage their hearing problems is through wearing hearing aids. As well as this, there are several important social considerations. This booklet will suggest ways to address these elements and improve your hearing and communication.

Communication is a key part in all our lives; if this is impaired through hearing loss it can cause difficulties, frustration and upset to you and those that you need and want to communicate with. It might be that the more important the person is in your life, the more frustrated or upset you might feel about your problems with hearing loss.

Think about the people you communicate with at home and when you are out. Who are the most important people you want to be able to hear and in what situations?

## Hearing loss situations

### MY THOUGHTS

*My husband is always moaning at me to turn the television down, it gets me down.*

*Children today just don't speak clearly, they mumble, it makes me so cross.*

*I can't hear my daughter on the telephone, these new mobile phones are not as good as old landline ones; it is so frustrating.*

*I may as well not be there, I can't follow the conversation. It's a waste of time going out just to feel isolated.*

*Why do they have to play music in public places? I can never hear how much I'm being asked for in shops and restaurants, it makes me look stupid.*

### OTHERS' THOUGHTS

#### Husband:

*The television is up so loud, she just doesn't listen and it upsets me.*

#### Grandchild:

*Why doesn't grandma answer when I ask her a question, it makes me sad.*

#### Daughter:

*It would be good to have a conversation with mum on the phone without having to constantly repeat myself, it is hard work.*

#### Friends:

*We know she struggles with her hearing so we try to make sure she is following the conversation, but you can see by her face or her response that she has lost the thread, she used to be a real entertainer.*

#### Shop Assistant:

*She's lovely but I wish she would get her hearing sorted, she never gives me the right money and I am embarrassed to keep repeating what I am saying.*

## Section 3



### Good communication tactics

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.

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.



#### 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 shout

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



#### Get to the point

Use plain language and don't waffle.



#### Find a suitable place to talk

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



#### 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.



#### Don't cover your mouth

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

## Section 4



### What will happen at my assessment?

**The audiologist will ask you questions about:**

- Your hearing difficulties, e.g. hearing your family and TV.
- Any ear pain, infections, noises in your ears etc..
- Look in your ears.
- Perform a simple hearing test.
- Discuss and agree with you the best options available for you.
- This may include fitting hearing aids, if suitable, which you train to your specific listening requirements.

Alternatively you may be fitted with other hearing aids, as advised by the audiologist.

Please remove pages 13-15  
and return to your audiologist

### Hearing history

Please complete the following and bring along to your first appointment.

Have you experienced persistent pain affecting either ear?  
(defined as earache lasting more than 7 days in the past 90 days before appointment)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you experienced a history of discharge other than wax from either ear within the last 90 days?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you experienced sudden loss or sudden deterioration of hearing?  
(sudden = within 1 week)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you experienced rapid loss or rapid deterioration of hearing?  
(rapid=90 days or less)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you experienced fluctuating hearing loss, other than associated with colds?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you hear very much better in one ear than the other?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you experience troublesome noises (tinnitus) different or worse in one ear than the other?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do these noises cause you sleep disturbance, anxiety or depression?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In the last three months, have you experienced any dizziness or imbalance, for example spinning, swaying or floating sensations and veering to the side when walking?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### How you can prepare for your hearing assessment

Think about, and answer the following questions by ticking the relevant boxes.

☐ = None ☐ = A lot

**Does this situation happen in your life?**

Listening to the television with other family or friends when the volume is adjusted to suit other people	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N
---	----------------------------	----------------------------

How much difficulty do you have in this situation?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**Does this situation happen in your life?**

Having a conversation with one other person when there is no background noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N
---	----------------------------	----------------------------

How much difficulty do you have in this situation?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**Does this situation happen in your life?**

Carrying on a conversation in a busy street or shop	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N
---	----------------------------	----------------------------

How much difficulty do you have in this situation?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**Does this situation happen in your life?**

Having a conversation with several people in a group	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N
--	----------------------------	----------------------------

How much difficulty do you have in this situation?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



# Section 4

We have dealt with some of the situations which in our experience can lead to difficulty with hearing. What we would now like you to do is to nominate one or two new situations in which it is important for you as an individual to be able to hear as well as possible.

0 = None 5 = A lot

## Hearing situation for you as an individual

How much difficulty do you have in this situation? 0 1 2 3 4 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you? 0 1 2 3 4 5

## Hearing situation for you as an individual

How much difficulty do you have in this situation? 0 1 2 3 4 5

How much does any difficulty in this situation worry, annoy or upset you? 0 1 2 3 4 5

## Your Expectation

0 = Not at all 10 = Very much

How important it is for you to improve your hearing right now? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much do you believe in your ability to use hearing aids? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How much benefit do you expect to gain from using hearing aids? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Don't forget to bring this booklet with you for your first appointment.





## Section 5

### Sources of further information

#### Action on Hearing Loss *(formerly known as RNID)*

**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](mailto:informationline@hearingloss.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

#### British Tinnitus Association

**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](mailto:info@tinnitus.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.tinnitus.org.uk](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk)

#### Hearing Link

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](mailto:enquiries@hearinglink.org)

**Website:** [www.hearinglink.org/contactus](http://www.hearinglink.org/contactus)

#### Sense *(for deafblind people)*

**Telephone:**

0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972

**Textphone:**

0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972

**Fax:**

0300 330 9251

**Head Office:**

101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG

**Email:** [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

#### Signia Hearing Aids

[www.signia-hearing.co.uk](http://www.signia-hearing.co.uk)

NOTES:

