

Adult Services

General information

Audiology Department
Level 7, Derriford Hospital
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Plymouth
PL6 8DH
Tel: 01752 431253
E-mail: plh-tr.audiology@nhs.net
www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk





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Please note that the information included in this leaflet is aimed at patients whose hearing aids were fitted by Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust.

If your hearing aids were arranged through another provider, e.g. Specsavers / Express Diagnostics then you will need to contact them directly for ongoing maintenance and repair of your hearing aids.

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Key information for new or experienced hearing aid users

You can get batteries from your local GP

You should have a brown battery book (either issued today or at your original fitting). This book entitles you to free batteries from any NHS supplier (this includes most GP surgeries and the audiology department at the hospital).

Your hearing aid and ear piece need to be checked every 6 months.

Every 6 months we will replace the tubing on your hearing aid and check everything is working as it should. We can also check your ears for wax on repairs.

Please check the back of this leaflet for details about opening times and locations.

It's normal to find getting used to your hearing aid difficult.

Getting used to new hearing aids or new settings takes time, building up use slowly can be a good way to start. To make the most out of your hearing aids, try to wear them as much as possible. If you're having difficulty getting used to your hearing aids please make a note and discuss these issues with your audiologist at your follow up appointment.

We can send you new batteries or repair your hearing aids by post.

The quickest and easiest way for us to help is face to face but if you can't get down to see us we will try to help by post.

Batteries: Post your brown battery book and a stamped addressed envelope (large stamp needed) to the address on the back of this leaflet.

Broken hearing aids: Send the hearing aid and mould/thin tube with your brown battery book to the address on the back of this leaflet. You also need to include a note explaining the problem. We aim to get this back to you within a week but it may take longer at busy times.

It's not all about hearing aids.

We can provide advice and information about environmental aids to help with hearing the telephone or the doorbell and assistive listening devices such as Bluetooth streamers or loop systems. We can also direct you to charitable organisations in the South West who specialise in these areas and provide loan equipment or specialist advice and recommendations.

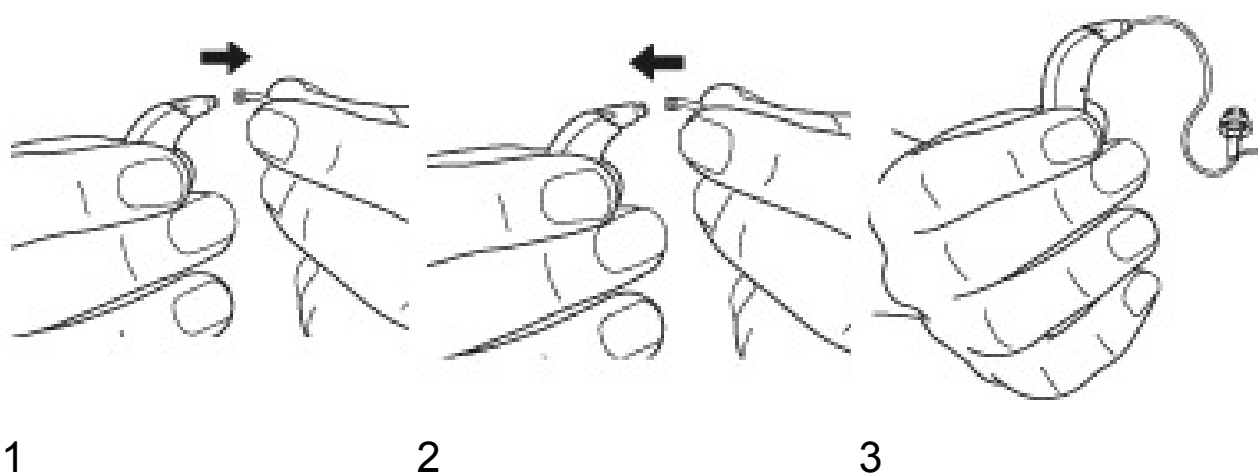
See the Support Services pages or ask your audiologist for more information.

Cleaning your hearing aids

Follow the advice that relates to your hearing aid

Changing a Corda thin tube

1. Pull the tube out of the hearing aid.
2. Push the tube into the hearing aid.
3. Correct.

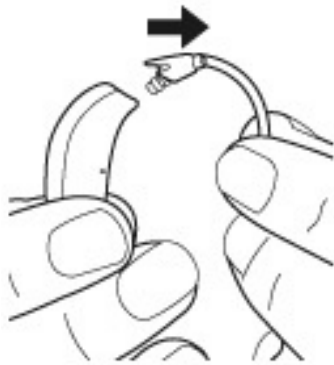


Please note: The tube and dome (soft tip) should never be separated, except by your audiologist. There is no need to remove the soft dome on the end of the tube for cleaning – doing so loosens the tip and increases the risk of it coming off in your ear. Please leave the tube and dome connected at all times.

Cleaning a Corda thin tube

To remove cerumen from the thin tube:

1.



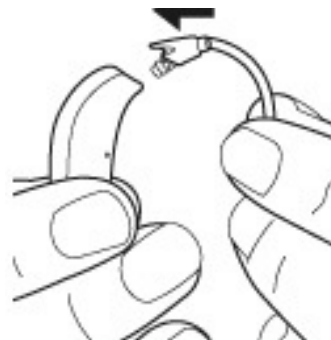
2.



3.



4.



1. Pull tube out of the hearing instrument.
2. Insert the cleaning tool into the tube...
3. ... all the way through.
4. Remove the tool and push the tube into the hearing instrument.

A video showing how to do this can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.oticon.co.uk/support/hearing-aids/care-and-maintenance/cleaning/behind-the-ear/corda-thin-tube.aspx>

Cleaning an ear mould

1. Clean away any traces of wax from around the sound outlet with a brush or pin.
2. Clean the ventilation opening by pressing a brush or cotton bud through the hole while twisting it slightly.

Cleaning the sound outlet



Cleaning the vent



Washing the earmould

An earmould should be washed regularly:

- Disconnect the earmould and the tubing from the sound hook of the hearing instrument.
- Wash the earmould in lukewarm water using a mild soap. Do not use strong detergents.
- Rinse with water.
- Dry the earmould.
- Any water drops inside the earmould or tubing should be blown out. A special device for this purpose – an earmould blower – is available from your hearing care professional.

Disconnecting
the earmould



Rinsing the
earmould



Blowing any
water drops
out of the
earmould



Make sure that the earmould and tubing are completely dry before they are reconnected to the hearing aid. Be careful that the left ear's earmould and tubing are connected to the hearing aid with left ear marking (blue) and correspondingly for the right ear instrument (red).

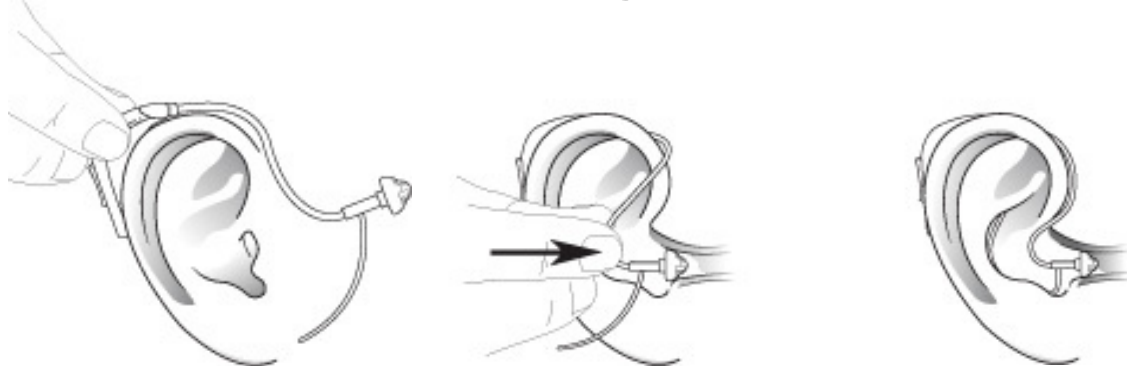
Important notice

The hearing aid itself with the mould must never be washed or immersed in water or other liquids.

Putting in your hearing aids

Follow the advice that relates to your hearing aid

Open fit / thin tube fittings



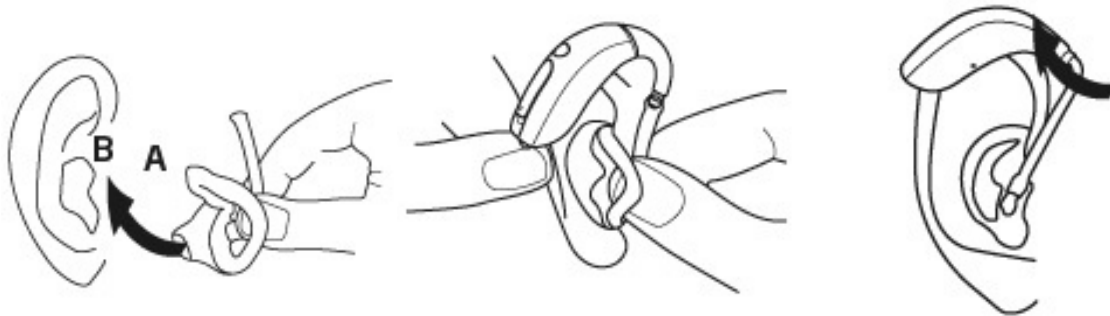
Place the hearing instrument behind your ear.

1. Hold the bend of the tube between your thumb and index finger. The dome should point towards the ear canal opening. Gently push the dome into your ear canal until the sound tube sits close against the side of your head.
2. Position the ear grip in the concha using your index finger. Look in a mirror. If the sound tube is sticking out from your ear, the dome has not been placed correctly in the ear canal. If the ear grip is visibly sticking out from your ear it has not been positioned correctly. To remove the instrument, pull on the bend of the tube.

A video showing how to do this can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.oticon.co.uk/support/hearing-aids/care-and-maintenance/wearing/putting-on/minibte-and-bte-with-corda-thin-tube.aspx>

Ear mould fittings

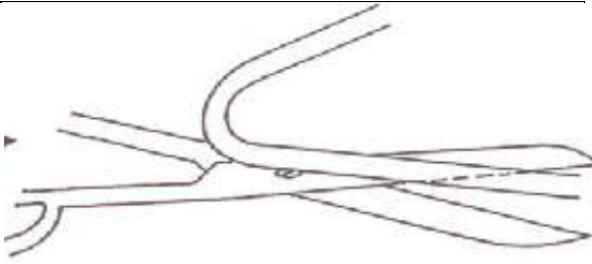
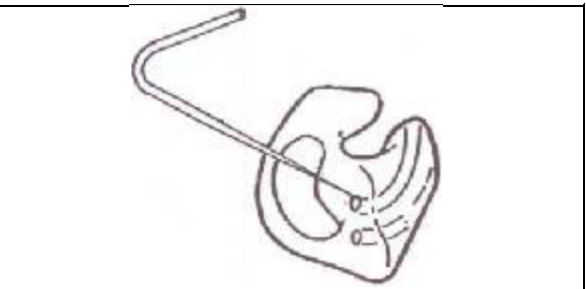
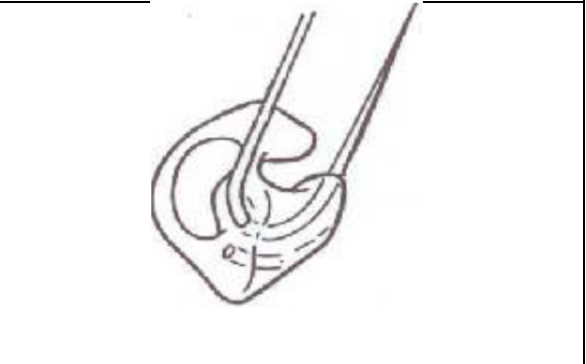
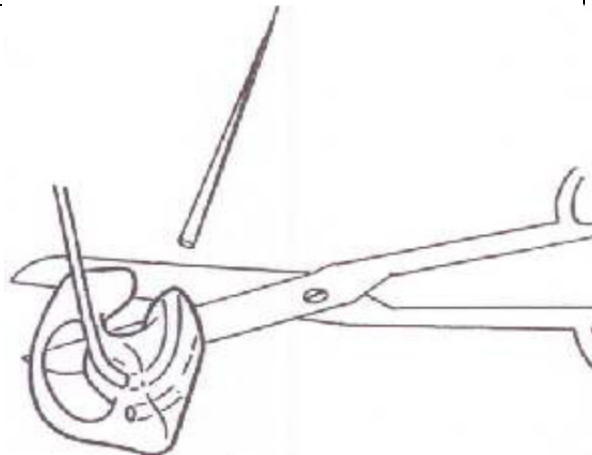


1. Place the tip of the earmould in the ear canal, twisting slightly, making sure that the top part of the earmould (A) is pushed behind and under the fold (B) of the ear.
2. Gently pull up the ear and press the earmould in the direction of the ear canal.
3. With the earmould positioned correctly in the ear, place the hearing aid behind the ear by lifting the base of the hearing instrument over the top of the ear.

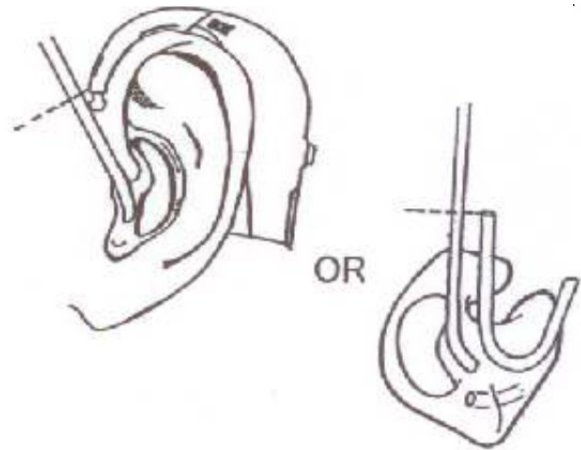
A video showing how to do this can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.oticon.co.uk/support/hearing-aids/care-and-maintenance/wearing/putting-on/minibte-bte-and-power.aspx>

Retubing your Ear mould

<p>Pull the old tubing out of the mould and keep it. Taper the last inch of the new tubing.</p>	
<p>Thread the tapered end through from the outside of the mould.</p>	
<p>Pull the tubing through mould until the tapered end has passed right through and the other end is flat against the outside of the mould.</p>	
<p>Cut off the tapered end as close to the mould as possible.</p>	

To adjust the tubing to the right length, place the mould in your ear; ask somebody to mark the tubing just past the end of the hearing aid hook, then remove the mould and cut the tubing at this point. Or use the old piece of tubing as a guide: hold it against the mould and cut the new tubing to the same length.



Squeeze the top of the tube and fit it over the end of the hearing aid hook



Common problems

There are a few common problems that will affect hearing aid users from time to time. Below are a few of the most common and some help on how to deal with them.

If your hearing aid stops working:

- Try changing the battery
- Check the battery is in the right way round
- Take your hearing aid out and check the tubing is not blocked with wax
- Check whether there are droplets of condensation in the tubing. If there are, gently pull the soft tubing off the hooked part of the aid and blow down the tubing to remove the droplets
- Check that your tube (thick or thin) is not twisted, squashed or split
- Turn the hearing aid off and on (open and close the battery drawer) – this will make sure that the hearing aid is not accidentally on the wrong program or the volume control is turned down.

If your hearing aid is whistling, squealing or buzzing:

- This could be feedback which happens when sound from your hearing aid leaks out and gets picked up by its microphone
- You may not have put the earmould in properly – push it gently to check
- You may have excess wax in your ears – ask your GP to check your ears
- If your aid is buzzing turn the aid off and on again to check you aren't accidentally on the loop or 'T' setting.

If none of these tips solve the problem then it would be best to come to either a drop-in or booked repair session to have your hearing aid checked. See repairs page for details.

Please note that removing the sticker from the back of your battery 5 minutes before use extends battery life by around 20-25%. Try to get your next battery ready when you first hear the low battery warning to maximise your battery life.

If your tubing or ear mould are damaged, twisted or split, or if your hearing aids are causing you any discomfort then you should always come to repairs.

Repairs at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

What is a repair?

Repairs are short appointments with an audiologist or assistant audiologist where we can solve quick problems or perform general maintenance on your hearing aid or ear mould. We can't make adjustments to the sound of your hearing aid, for this you would need to call us and make a follow up appointment.

Come to repairs if:

- Your hearing aid /ear mould is broken/damaged
- Your ear mould is making your ear sore
- Your hearing aid is whistling
- You need new tubing in your ear moulds (should be replaced every 6 months)
- You would like a volume control or extra programs e.g the loop system adding to your hearing aid
- You are having any difficulties using your hearing aid or understanding the controls

Drop in repairs service opening times (Derriford only):

Monday	9am-12 midday	2-4pm
Tuesday	9am-12 midday	2-4pm
Wednesday	9am-12 midday	CLOSED
Thursday	CLOSED	2-4pm
Friday	9am-12 midday	2-4pm

You need to **book** a repair appointment if you wish to be seen at **South Hams Hospital, Launceston, Liskeard, Stratton or Tavistock**. Please call the hospital directly to arrange this, telephone numbers on back of leaflet.

Appointments

As a hearing aid user at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust you can always get an appointment if you need one.

Depending on the nature of the problem an appointment with an audiologist may not be necessary and the repairs service may be able to meet your needs (see repairs page).

If you are unhappy with your hearing aids or feel things have changed then further appointments can help.

Call us on 01752 431253 or 01752 431254 if you feel that the settings of your hearing aid are not right for you, or you feel like your hearing has changed and we can arrange a follow up appointment to retest your hearing and check your hearing aid/s.

If your last hearing test was more than three years ago and you feel your hearing has changed or you aren't doing as well with your hearing aids as you used to, then you are eligible for a reassessment appointment. Call us on 01752 431253 or 01752 431254 to arrange an appointment to retest your hearing, check you're wearing the best hearing aids for your hearing loss and make any other adjustments necessary to improve your hearing.

You may be asked to get a new referral from your GP in order to get a reassessment appointment, if so, our admin team will inform you of this.

Communication tactics

Tips if you have a hearing loss

- Be open. Tell the person you're speaking to that you have a hearing loss
- Ask people to get your attention before they start talking to you.
- Get a better view: stand a reasonable distance from the person so you can see their face and lips. Gestures and facial expressions will help you understand what they're saying.
- If necessary, ask people to slow down and speak more clearly.
- If you don't catch what someone says, just ask them to say it again or in a different way.
- Play to your strengths: if your hearing is better in one ear try turning that side towards the person speaking to you
- Keep calm. If you get anxious you might find it harder to follow what's being said.
- Learn to lipread: everyone does it a bit, especially in noisy places.
- Be kind to yourself. No one hears correctly all the time.

Tips when speaking to someone with a hearing loss

- Even if someone is wearing hearing aids it doesn't mean they can hear you perfectly. Ask if they need to lip-read.
- Make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking
- Speak clearly, not too slowly and use normal lip movements, facial expressions and gestures.
- Don't shout. It can be uncomfortable for hearing aid users and it looks aggressive.
- If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way instead.
- Find a suitable place to talk, with good lighting and away from noise and distractions.
- Check that the person you're talking to is following you during the conversation. Use plain language and don't waffle. Avoid jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations.

Hear to Help

Do you live in Devon or Cornwall and need help with your hearing aids?

If so, the Hear to Help service may be able to help you! Funded by The Co-operative, our Devon and Cornwall Hear to Help service was launched in April 2011. We provide support to hearing aid users, enabling people to make the most of their hearing aid and manage their hearing loss effectively.

Our service is community based and our Community Support Officer and volunteers provide the service through outreach work, home visits and drop-in services. Our free service includes:

- tubing, minor repairs, ear mould cleaning and battery replacement
- basic training for hearing aid users on maintenance and usage of their hearing aid
- providing advice and support to enable people to make the most of their hearing aid
- providing information on other equipment and services.

Hear to help runs at various locations in Devon and Cornwall. These locations and times change so it is best to contact Hear to help directly to find out if there is a drop in service near to you

Get in touch

For further information about our Devon and Cornwall Hear to Help service, or if you are interested in becoming a Hear to Help volunteer, please contact our Community Support Officer:

Action on Hearing Loss

Unit 27

HQ Business Centre

237 Union Street

Plymouth

PL1 3HQ

Telephone: 01752 228657

Textphone: 01752 604862

Fax : 01752 267925

Email: heartohelp.Devon&Cornwall@hearingloss.org.uk



Sensory Solutions

Sensory Solutions provides information, advice and equipment for people of all ages with concerns about sight or hearing. Family members, carers, friends, professionals and employers are welcome to use this confidential and impartial service provided by trained advisors.

We provide the following services from our base at 156 Mannamead Road and out in the community:

- **Resource Centre** - a well-stocked demonstration centre showcasing assistive technology designed to help people with sensory impairment live independently. We also offer a FREE home trial service for most equipment
- **Outreach Service** – a home visiting service offering practical support to promote independent living
- **Insight training course** introducing people with sight impairments to the local and national support available to help them adjust to living with sight loss
- **Low Vision Service** – help with managing the impact on life of low vision
- **Support for people who have hearing loss and those who are profoundly Deaf**
- Individual and group **Information Technology (IT)** sessions
- **Braille tuition and ‘Skills for Seeing’ (Eccentric viewing) training**
- **Sensory Awareness training** for individuals and businesses
- **Tailored training** for medical and allied professionals on how to support patients with sensory loss
- **Programme of exhibitions and events**

Opening Hours

Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 5.00pm

We are closed on all Bank Holidays and for the week between Christmas and New Year.

Address

Sensory Solutions
Improving Lives Plymouth
156 Mannamead Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL3 5QL

Phone

01752 201899

Fax

01752 201895

SMS

07792 833929

Textphone

01752 201896

Email

sensorysolutions@improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk

Devon County Council Outreach Sensory Service

Devon Sensory Team provides support and advice to people who are visually impaired, Deaf, have an acquired hearing loss, are deafblind (sometimes known as a dual sensory impairment – a significant combination of hearing and sight loss).

Clinics are run in several locations around West Devon, Torridge and Dartmouth and Kingsbridge on a regular timetable, offering a free, confidential and impartial service for people with a hearing or visual impairment.

For the most up to date timetable please use the contact information below

Contact name: Mr. Graham Morford	Contact email: csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk
Contact telephone: 0345 155 1007	Website: https://new.devon.gov.uk/adultsocialcareandhealth/help-to-stay-living-at-home/sensory-disability-services/

C2Hear Online

C2Hear Online is a series of short, interactive, multimedia videos about hearing aids, hearing loss and communication.

C2Hear has been designed for first-time hearing aid users, but may also be beneficial to existing hearing aid users, as well as family and friends.

These videos have been shown to provide a range of benefits by a high-quality research study.

For more information visit the website:

<http://www.hearing.nihr.ac.uk/research/c2Hearonline>

C2Hear is now freely available online and can be accessed via computers, smartphones and tablets via YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_CO85ih5H68q5YSxMziidw

C2Hear Online is a partnership between:



Access to work

Finding work or continuing to work with a hearing impairment can sometimes be challenging. An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to help you:

- start working
- stay in work
- move into self-employment or start a business

To qualify for an access to work grant your disability or health condition must affect your ability to do a job or mean you have to pay work-related costs. For example, special computer equipment or travel costs because you can't use public transport.

The money can pay for things like:

- special equipment
- disability awareness training for your colleagues
- the cost of moving your equipment if you change location or job

If you think that an Access to work grant may help you, contact the access to work centre directly, where you will be offered advice and guidance from an access to work advisor.

You can find details of your local work centre by going to <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/how-to-claim>

You could also contact your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office and ask to talk to an access to work adviser or a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) for advice and an application form. Alternatively, if you are in employment you could speak to your employer.

Lip reading classes

If you have a hearing loss then lip reading can support your hearing aids and help you to make the most of the hearing you do have. Lessons typically cover ways of coping with hearing loss, communication tactics to make the best of different listening environments and, of course, practicing your lip reading.

Lip reading classes can be a good way to meet other people with hearing impairment and share tips and stories on how you manage your hearing aids and hearing loss.

You can find out more about lip reading classes at the Association of teachers of lip reading to adults website: <http://atlalipreading.org.uk/>

In the South West, lip reading classes have been run by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). You are advised to call to check whether classes are running, how long they run for and whether or not there is a charge to join.

For information contact the WEA

Website: www.wea.org.uk

Plymouth Office

Tel: 01752 666265

E-mail: plymouthoffice@wea.org.uk

Cornwall Office

Tel: 01872 320036

E-mail: cornwalloffice@wea.org.uk

Services for people with hearing loss and visual impairment

Sense is a national charity that supports people who are deafblind, have sensory impairments or complex needs, to enjoy more independent lives. Our expertise in supporting individuals with communication needs benefits people of all ages, as well as their families and carers. We provide information and advice, offer a wide range of flexible services and campaign passionately for the rights of the people we serve.

Sense provides flexible, creative and innovative services. Paying particular attention to each individual's communication, sensory and mobility needs to enable them to live as independently as possible, to have control and make choices about how they live.

This includes providing opportunities for individuals to use their personal budgets to purchase Sense services that enable them to remain connected to their family, friends and local community.

Following initial contact with Sense we will arrange a visit with an assessment and advice worker. At this point we aim to identify the persons' needs in discussion with them, and if appropriate, their family. We will then work with the individual to see how their needs can be met.

For more information contact Sense Community Services

Manager: Tel: 07557026913

Email: Rachael.Robb@sense.org.uk

Website: <https://www.sense.org.uk/>

Tinnitus and Hearing Therapy services at Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Tinnitus

The word 'tinnitus' comes from the Latin word for 'ringing' and is the perception of sound in the absence of any corresponding external sound. Noises may be heard in either ear or both ears, it might be difficult to pinpoint or seem to be just in your head. The noise may be low, medium or high-pitched. It might be one sound or different sounds and it might be there all the time or it might come and go.

What causes tinnitus?

Tinnitus is not a disease or an illness, it is a symptom generated within a person's own auditory pathways. The precise cause of tinnitus is still not fully understood.

Who gets tinnitus?

Experiences of tinnitus are very common in all age groups, especially following exposure to loud noise; however, it is unusual for it to be a major problem. Mild tinnitus is common, about 10 per cent of the population have it all the time and, in up to one per cent of adults, this may affect the quality of their life.

What should you do if you have tinnitus?

Firstly, try not to worry. Tinnitus rarely indicates a serious underlying problem, however, if you do suffer with tinnitus it is wise to let your doctor or audiologist know as they may be able to provide advice to help you manage it. If something treatable is causing your tinnitus they can also refer you on to a specialist.

What is hearing therapy?

Hearing therapists provide advice, information and support for people with tinnitus. If your tinnitus is bothering you, interfering with your sleep or affecting your hearing then your audiologist can provide information and advice initially and refer you to see a hearing therapist if required.

More information about tinnitus is on the British Tinnitus Association website: <http://www.tinnitus.org.uk/>

Useful Links

Meniere's Society – Charity for people with dizziness and balance disorders <http://www.menieres.org.uk/>

Hearing Link - UK organisation for people with hearing loss and their families. Information, services & support, and option to connect with others to share experiences & advice. <http://www.hearinglink.org/home>

Sensory Solutions – Plymouth based charity providing information, advice and equipment for individuals with hearing and/or visual impairments
<https://www.improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk/our-services/sensory-solutions>

British Tinnitus Association – Information and advice on the condition. <http://www.tinnitus.org.uk/>

Action on Hearing Loss – National charity providing information, advice and support to hearing impaired individuals. <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>

C2Hear Online - To support you in getting used to your new hearing aid you can visit 'C2Hear Online':
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_CO85ih5H68q5YSxMziidw a series of short, interactive, multimedia videos about hearing aids, hearing loss and communication.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Our aim is to deliver the highest quality service and standards of individual care. Through listening to your views we can continue to develop and improve our services to our patients.

We welcome any suggestions or comments that will improve our services. Please speak to the department manager or the PALS department. You may also write to the chief executive.

Want to share a positive experience?

Share your experience through the feedback section on the NHS choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

If you have a complaint

You can make a complaint via writing, e-mail or telephone. Normally within 12 months of the event or within 12 months of learning about the problem.

Complaints Address:

Chief Executive

Level 7, Derriford Hospital

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Contact PALS

Visit the welcome centre for advice:

Monday – Friday 9am- 5pm

Phone: 01752 439884 or 432564

Email: plh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

Fax: 01752 768976

Write: Patient Advice & Liaison Office (PALS)

Patient Services, Level 7

Derriford Hospital

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Out of hours: In an emergency contact the duty manager through the hospital switchboard

Tel: 01752202082

If you don't want to speak directly to PALS, independent help is available.

ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service)

Tel: 0808 802 3000

Contacts

Contact telephone numbers:

Audiology appointments (Derriford Hospital): (01752) 431253/4

Technical calls: (01752) 763181*

*Please note the technical calls line is a voicemail service, please leave your name, query and contact number and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Booked repairs telephone numbers:

Kingsbridge (South Hams): 01548 852349

Launceston: 01566 765650

Liskeard: 01579 335600

Tavistock: 01822 612233

Stratton: 01288 320100



**This leaflet is available in large print
and other formats and languages.**

Contact: Administrator

Tel: 01752 431253/4

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For review: September 2019

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