



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Adult Hearing Services (Audiology) in Sussex: AQP and Non-AQP

Audiology

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about the different services that you may be referred to by your GP, to help you with your hearing. These all make up the Adult Hearing Service. You may also be referred to the ENT (ear, nose and throat) team, depending on your needs.

This information describes when and why you would be referred to each of the services, and what you should do if you have any problems after you have been referred.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information to help you know what to do if you are not happy with your hearing service and need to know how to resolve the issue.

It also includes a list of symptoms that might mean you need to be referred to ENT (ear, nose and throat).

Please keep this information handy as you may need to refer to it in the future.

What is the Adult Hearing Service?

The Adult Hearing Service provides hearing assessment, hearing rehabilitation, hearing aids (where these are needed) and aftercare for up to three years. It is paid for by the NHS.

In Sussex the Adult Hearing Service is split into two:

AQP, which means Any Qualified Provider.

AQP is a way of providing routine audiology (hearing) services in England. You can choose your care from a list of providers that meet the necessary quality standards. It is free at the point of access.

In Sussex, some of the AQP providers are Specsavers, Action for Deafness, Scrivens, and Eastbourne Hospital (EHST).

Non-AQP. These are NHS services that provide specialist audiology services.

Non-AQP providers include UHSussex Royal Sussex County Hospital, UHSussex Worthing Hospital, and ESHT (East Sussex HealthCare NHS Trust).

Which service will I be referred to?

This depends on what you need. After discussing your hearing with your GP, you might be referred to one of several different places:

You may be referred to an **AQP** hearing service if you:

- Are over 55 years old.
- Are experiencing age related hearing loss only.
- Are losing your hearing gradually.
- Have eardrums that appear healthy, with no wax.
- Are willing to use hearing aids.

You may be referred to a **non-AQP** service if you are not yet 55 years old, or you have:

- Complex hearing needs.
- A history of perforated eardrums, or have had ear surgery (for example, mastoid surgery).
- Tinnitus in both ears or tinnitus that impacts your quality of life.
- Complex needs such as learning difficulties or dementia.
- Severe or profound hearing loss.
- One ear that hears better than the other (also called asymmetry).

What if I have a problem with my hearing that can't be helped by an AQP or non-AQP service?

You may be referred to an ENT (ear, nose and throat) service if you have:

- Sudden hearing loss (within the last week).
- Rapid loss of hearing within the last 90 days.
- Hearing loss that comes and goes (apart from with a cold).
- Something does not look right with your outer ear or your eardrum.

- Something blocking your ear canal.
- Discharge from your ear that is not wax, within the last 90 days.
- Persistent pain in either ear for more than seven days in the past 90 days.
- Tinnitus in one or both ears, pulsatile (rhythmic) or distressing tinnitus that lasts for more than five minutes at a time.
- Troublesome tinnitus which may lead to sleep disturbance.
- Abnormal auditory perceptions, also called dysacusis. This means that the sounds you hear are distorted and can cause you pain.
- Normal peripheral hearing but have difficulty hearing in noisy backgrounds.
- Vertigo (dizziness).

What should I do if I am not happy with the care I am receiving?

If you think you may have been referred to the wrong service, speak to your GP. But being referred to an AQP or non-AQP service is a choice that your GP makes on your behalf. It is not something that you can choose.

If your GP confirms that you have been referred to the correct service, but you are unhappy with the care that you get from them, the first step is to try and resolve any problems that you have with your current service.

Sussex Integrated Care Board

If your concerns continue then contact Sussex Integrated Care Board on: **0300 140 9854** sxicb.contactus@nhs.net

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton.

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