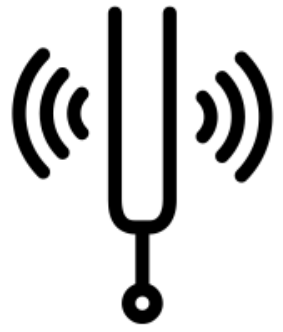
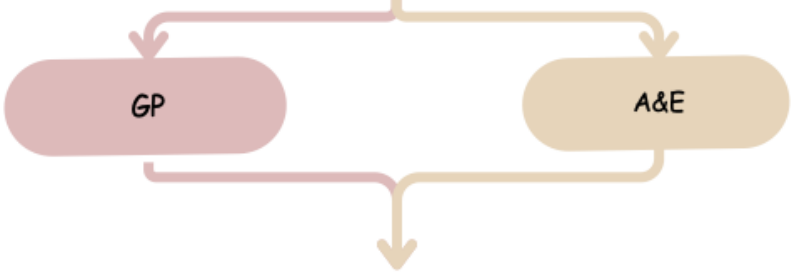


ASSESSMENT



SUDDEN SENSORINEURAL HEARING LOSS (SSNHL) PATHWAY

SSNHL picked up in community audiology... Provide patient with copy of audiogram
Request patient attend A&E
If no other confoundings (e.g.no evidence of stroke or other illness) call ENT SHO For review and to discuss +/- receive steroids



Weber's Test Tuning Fork Reminder:

In SSNHL -> Place tuning fork on vertex of skull un midline, sound will localise to other ear
In Conductive HL -> sound localise to same (affected/bad) ear

Wax Impaction on Otoscopy?

History and Webers test consistent with ?SSNHL
Action - GP / A&E: start Steroids, information leaflet (see page 2)
AND
Refer to ENT SHO on-call for review in Emergency clinic at Day 7.

Tuning Fork Test Unreliable?

If suspicious for SSNHL but tuning fork not heard by patient or doesn't lateralise on Weber's then...
GP / A&E to start steroids (see page 2)
AND refer to ENT SHO on-call for urgent review (within 72 hours)

ASSESSMENT

Features of SSNHL in bold*

- Take History
Unprovoked, Sudden, Painless
- Otoscopy
Normal Tympanic Membrane (or difficult to see with Ear Wax)
- Neuro Exam
Normal
- Weber's Test (512 Hz Fork)
Lateralises to other (good) ear

SUDDEN V GRADUAL HEARING?

SUDDEN - drops <3 days
GRADUAL - over months/occured >4wks ago

UNLIKELY TO CONSIDER TREATMENT

Otoscopy Findings Abnormal?

e.g. Otitis Media / Otitis Externa
Treat as per GP / A&E expertise

Neuro Conditions/Abnormal Neuro Exam?

e.g. Stroke
Treat as per GP / A&E expertise

YES to SOME?

YES to NONE?

YES to ALL?

Consider ALTERNATIVE DIAGNOSIS?

DIAGNOSIS

Likely SSNHL?

GP / A&E to start PO Prednisolone (see dose regime)
Please also provide Patient leaflet (see QR code)
AND
Refer to ENT SHO on-call to book Emergency clinic appointment 7
days from when treatment started by GP / A&E

Emergency clinic review (and audiogram)
within 72 hours for unclear Tuning Fork
Test Results



[Intratympanic injections to treat sudden hearing loss -
University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Please provide
patient information leaflet

Emergency clinic review 7
days after steroid started

Oral Prednisalone dose regime in SSNHL:
1mg / Kg (Max 60mg daily) for 7 days, with taper.

Typical adult regime would be:

Day 1 → 7	60mg
Day 8	50mg
Day 9	40mg
Day 10	30mg

Day 11	20mg
Day 12	10mg
Day 12	STOP

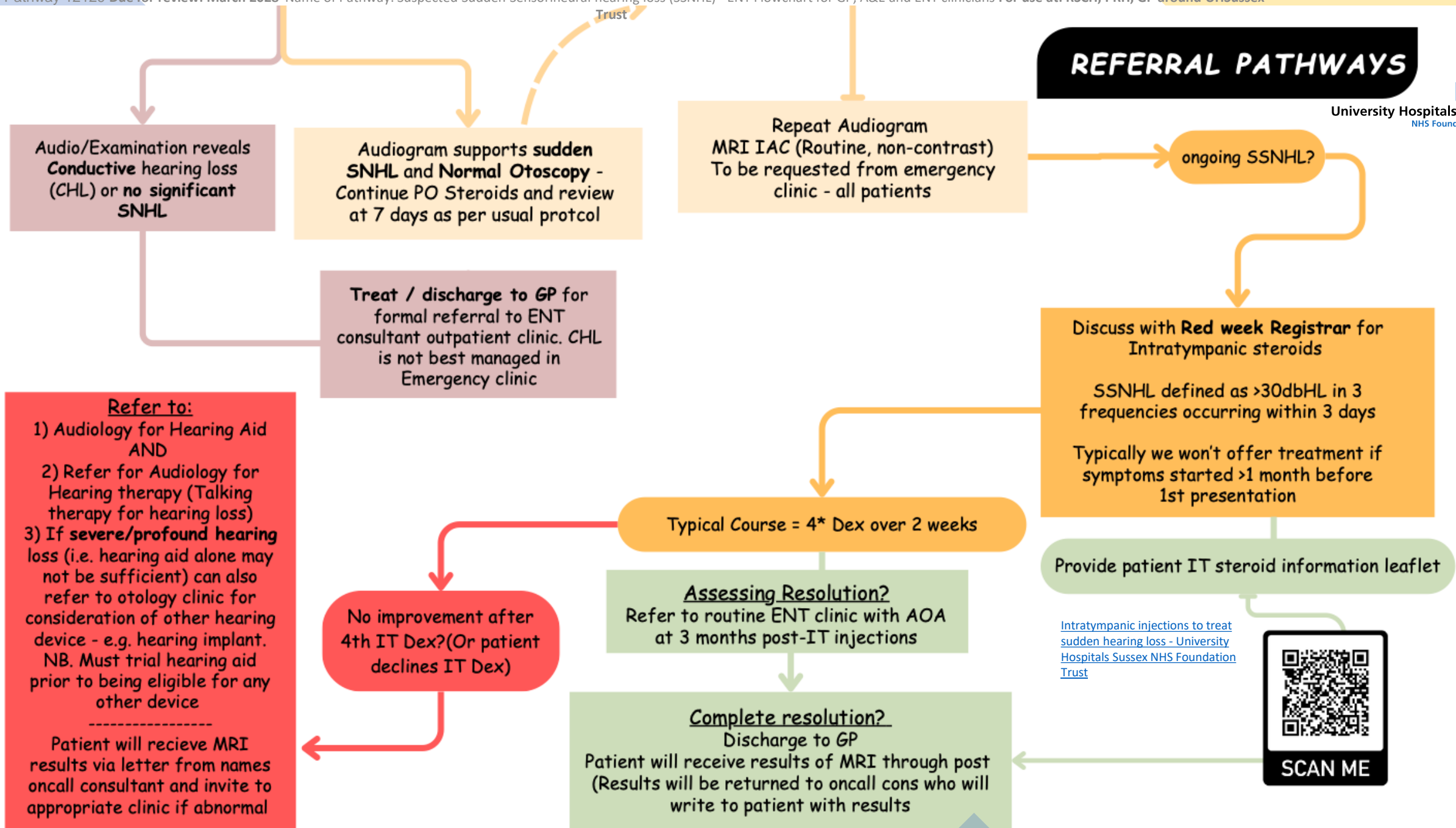
Benefits: Increases the likelihood of recovery. Spontaneous recovery untreated is 30-68%.
Roughly doubled (in some studies) with Steroid treatment.

Risks: Abdominal discomfort, mood changes, bruising, High Glucose (extra care in diabetics),
Avascular necrosis of hip (0.2%)

Risk of NO steroids: maximum benefit from steroids obtained the sooner they are started
preferably within 72 hours.
Minimal / no benefit if started after 1 month.

Who to Treat: Certainly any patient with >30dbHL in 3 frequencies presenting within 1 month of
loss
For patients with >10-15dbHL in 2 frequencies ideally we would want to start treatment, but
balance against other co-morbidities. **Discuss with red registrar if unsure.**

REFERRAL PATHWAYS



Clinical Pathway 12129 governance and approval

Owner	Mr Andrew Moore
Author/further information	Dr Syed Ammar Husain (Academic FY2), Dr Robert Grounds (ENT Consultant), Ms Katy Bishop (Audiologist)
Pathway Version	Otolaryngology Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss Flowchart for A&E and GP Clinicians.
Related policies	https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98 - NICE (1.4.1, 1.5.3) https://www.entuk.org/_userfiles/pages/files/guidelines/SSNHL%20SSO.pdf - Management of suspected unilateral idiopathic sudden sensorineural hearing loss in adults
Related documents	https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/resources/what-to-do-if-you-have-a-sudden-change-in-hearing/ - Audiology SNNHL Leaflet https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/resources/intratympanic-injections-to-treat-sudden-hearing-loss/ - Steroid injections SSNHL patient leaflet
Standards	ENT UK , NICE Guidelines
Superseded documents	N/A
Review due	3 years from ratification date

Approval

ENT QSPE (Quality, Safety and Patient Experience) Clinical Governance Meeting	Date approved:	21/03/2024
Audiology divisional (Manuel Loureiro – Head of Audiology)	Date approved:	28/11/2024

Consultation

Otology subspecialist consultants	Date approved:	18/09/2024
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Ratification

Clinical Document Approval Group	Date approved:	11/3/25
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Pathway version control log

Version	Date	Author(s)	Comment
1	06/03/2025	Dr Syed Ammar Hussain	