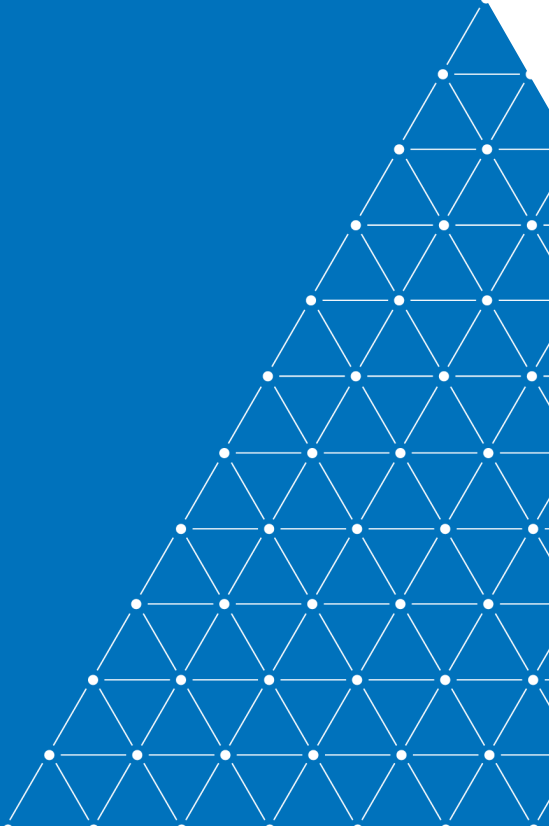


What happens after I am diagnosed with SSNHL

(Sudden Sensorineural
Hearing Loss)?

Audiology

Patient information

A decorative geometric pattern in the bottom right corner, consisting of a grid of white dots connected by lines to form a series of triangles.

What is this information about?

This information is about what happens after you are diagnosed with SSNHL.

It explains:

- what may cause SSNHL
- how knowing that you have SSNHL may make you feel
- what help we can offer you
- where to find further information and support.

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because you have been diagnosed with Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSNHL). You may hear this called 'idiopathic' hearing loss which means that there is often no clear cause for the hearing loss.

Reading this information will help you to know what to expect from SSNHL and what care and support is available to you.

What causes SSNHL?

It is often not possible to find the exact cause. This is because the inner ear is very small, complex, and difficult to assess with current testing methods.

SSNHL is an uncommon condition. Around 15,000 people in the UK get SSNHL each year.

Causes can include:

- **a viral infection:**
A virus (such as herpes simplex, which causes cold sores) may affect the inner ear and lead to inflammation (swelling). This can put pressure on the delicate hearing parts of the ear and disrupt how sound signals are sent.

- **a blood supply issue (microvascular occlusion):**

This involves a short-lived sudden disruption to the tiny blood vessels that supply the inner ear. These vessels are its only source of oxygen and nutrients. If the hearing cells do not get these, even for a short time, it can affect how they work.

- **an autoimmune reaction:**

Sometimes, the body's immune system attacks healthy cells in the inner ear by mistake. This can cause inflammation and damage to the hearing cells, nerves, or blood vessels.

How might I feel if I get SSNHL?

Being told that you have a permanent hearing loss can be a shock. It is usual to have a feeling of loss.

You might find yourself:

- **feeling frustrated or angry** at the suddenness of the change and the lack of a cause or fix.
- **feeling isolated**, with the change in your experience of conversations.
- **feeling exhausted**, as your brain needs to work harder to process sound.

You may need time to accept what has happened and consider how the change in your hearing affects you and your day-to-day life.

What help will you offer me to help me to cope with my SSNHL?

You will be offered separate appointments with our Audiology Team and our Hearing Therapy Team. Take the time you need if you do not feel ready to accept the referral straight away.

What if I do not want the appointment with the Audiology Team or Hearing Therapy Team yet?

This is your choice. If you do not want a referral from ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) to audiology or hearing therapy straight away, you can say no.

Ask your GP to refer you when you are ready for an appointment.

What can Hearing therapy and audiology do?

Hearing therapy

Hearing therapy can give you time and space to talk about the hearing loss and tinnitus.

You will be able to talk about the way that your hearing difficulties have affected your life, and how this impacts you.

This may include:

- your work
- home life
- social life
- things you enjoy, like listening to music.

Hearing therapy can help you explore how to manage and make the most of these situations.

The Hearing Therapy Team can advise you on things such as:

- **Tinnitus.**

UHSx Tinnitus Video www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/audiology/brighton/tinnitus/#tinnitus-information-video



QR code linking to a tinnitus video

- **Communication tactics.**

Please visit RNID – **How to communicate with someone who is deaf or has hearing loss** webpage for further information.

This includes a video.

www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/deaf-awareness/how-to-communicate-with-deaf-people-hearing-loss



QR code linking to a RNID video

- **equipment** other than hearing aids that may be useful.
- **where to find helpful resources** (for example, lip reading class, support groups, or psychological support)
- **support from other people who have hearing loss** (peer support)
- **therapies** such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Audiology

Audiology is here to help you find the hearing aids that work best for you. The type of hearing aid you are offered will depend on your hearing needs, but there are suitable options for every kind of hearing loss.

Your audiologist will talk you through the choices and help you understand each option. All modern hearing aids can pair with many modern mobile phones via Bluetooth. They come in a range of colours from light shades like blonde or beige to darker options like chocolate brown, silver, or black. Choose what feels right for you.

Who can I contact for further information and advice if I need them after I have read this information?

Audiology service, Brighton and Haywards Heath:

Postal address: Audiology Department, Sussex House, Abbey Road, Brighton, BN2 1ES

0300 303 9640

uhsussex.audiologybrighton@nhs.net

Services in Brighton – University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust

www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/audiology/brighton

Audiology service, Worthing and Southlands hospitals:

Postal address: Audiology Department, Worthing Hospital, Lyndhurst Road, Worthing, BN11 2DH

01903 285013

uhsussex.audiologyworthing@nhs.net

Services at Worthing and Southland's Hospital – University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust

www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/audiology/worthing-and-southlands

Where else can I get further support?

Hearing link SSNHL information

www.hearingdogs.org.uk/support/hearing/about/types



QR code to SSNHL

Tinnitus UK

www.tinnitus.org.uk



QR code to Tinnitus website

RNID – Information and Support

www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support



QR code to RNID Information and Support website

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or scan the QR code



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