



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Information about your hearing aid

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## **Audiology Department**

① For more information, please contact:

Audiology York Hospital  
York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE  
Telephone: 01904 726741

option 1 for batteries/tubing postal, option 2 for repair appointment  
and option 3 for general queries or to reschedule an appointment

Audiology Springhill House Scarborough  
19 Springhill Close, Scarborough, YO12 4AD  
Telephone: 01723 342821

Email: [yhs-tr.hearingaid.repairs@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.hearingaid.repairs@nhs.net)  
[yhs-tr.audiologyadmin@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.audiologyadmin@nhs.net)

For those unable to use the phone, text: 07970 671249

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## Welcome to Audiology

Welcome to York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust hospitals. You have been referred for a hearing aid assessment and fitting.

You have been assessed by a qualified audiologist who has suggested that you may receive benefit from hearing aids.

This booklet will explain what to expect from NHS digital hearing aids as well as the specific settings that your hearing aids have installed. There is also some useful information on maintenance, troubleshooting and links for further support in this booklet.

# Getting to know your hearing loss

## □ Mild

Sometimes patients with this level of hearing loss have difficulty following speech, especially in noisy situations. It usually manifests itself as a lack of clarity or the feeling that people are mumbling. This type of loss is often noticed by family first rather than the patient.

## □ Moderate

Often patients have difficulty following speech and may miss other quiet noises. Amplification is very successful for this loss, but patients may also need to make use of good communication tactics.

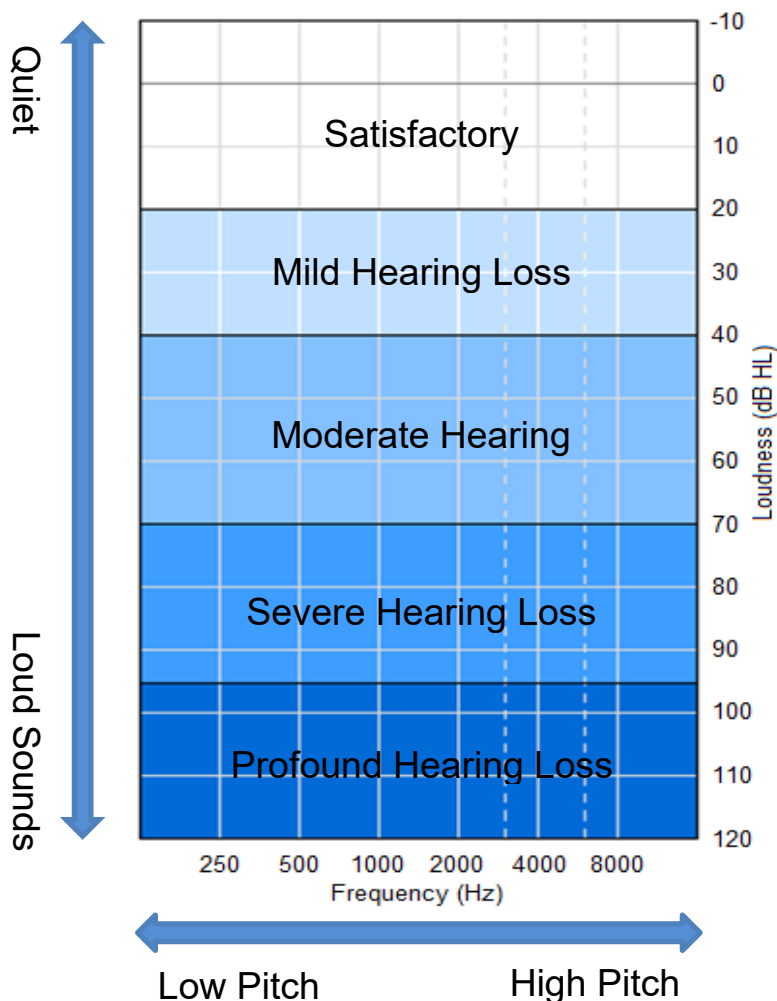
## □ Severe

Usually, patients are unable to hear average speech, even in quiet surroundings and may not hear general noises such as traffic noise unless they are loud. Amplification is very successful for this loss, but patients also need to use good communication tactics. Lip reading classes may also be very useful for patients with this hearing pattern.

## □ Profound

Patients would be unable to hear most sounds unless they are very loud. Amplification is often **useful**, but patients will need to rely on good communication tactics. Lip reading classes will also be very useful for people with this hearing pattern.

Lip reading classes will also be very useful for people with this hearing pattern.



**Please note:** Hearing can vary depending on the pitch, meaning patients often have hearing levels that fall into more than one category. Hearing can also differ between ears.

The type of hearing loss you have depends on which part of your hearing system isn't working properly. You may notice that we use one of the following terms to describe your hearing loss:

### **□ Sensori-neural**

Sensori-neural hearing loss is a common type of hearing loss which affects the inner ear. This is either the sensory hearing organ (the cochlea) or the hearing nerve. This type of hearing loss is usually permanent. It may be caused by age-related changes, noise exposure, viral infection, or medication that is toxic to your hearing system amongst other things. If you are born with hearing loss or hearing loss runs in your family it will usually be sensori-neural.

### **□ Conductive**

Conductive hearing loss can be temporary or permanent and affects either the outer ear or the middle ear. Conductive hearing loss may be caused by ear infections, perforated eardrums, middle ear fluid or conditions such as otosclerosis (a stiffening of the little bones in the middle ear) amongst other things.

### **□ Mixed**

Mixed hearing loss is a term used to describe a hearing loss that has a combination of sensori-neural and conductive components to it.

## An introduction to hearing aids

If suitable, you will be offered digital hearing aids. 'Digital' means that they are programmed by a computer to a prescription suitable for your hearing loss. A hearing aid should make speech clearer particularly in a quiet room.

Either a slimtube or an earmould has been prescribed for you, depending on your hearing loss. Your hearing aid may look like one of these below:



Slimtube



Earmould

Slimtubes are most suitable for patients who have mild to moderate sensori-neural hearing losses which mainly affect the higher frequencies.

Earmoulds enable us to provide you with more amplification as they are custom made to the shape of your ear. Therefore these tend to be more suitable for moderate to profound hearing losses, particularly if there is a conductive component. They may also be used if you have allergies.



## **What should I expect from my hearing aids?**

### **Will I have normal hearing with hearing aids in?**

No, the hearing aids will not restore normal hearing, but they will assist you with your hearing loss. Sound will become more natural over time, and they should help to take the strain out of listening. You may still find it difficult to follow what people are saying and, if both ears are impaired, wearing two aids may help you to focus better on what you want to listen to.

In noisy places such as a café or restaurant, background noise will still be present just like it is for someone who has normal hearing. Careful consideration should be made to where you place yourself. For example, in a restaurant try to sit at the edge of the room with your back to the wall as the acoustics will be better there than in the centre. Hearing aids also work better over shorter distances, so make sure you are no more than 1.5m from the person you want to hear.

### **Will my own voice change when I wear the hearing aids?**

When the aids are fitted the sound of your own voice will probably be a little strange. Most people adapt to this sound quickly. Some people find that their own voice may appear quieter to others during conversation, while to you it may sound loud.

## Is there anything else that could help me, in addition to hearing aids?

Yes. An assessment can be made through your local Social Services to determine whether you would benefit from extra equipment at home. You can refer yourself to those services.

Alternatively, if you live in the City of York area you might want to get in touch with YorSensory (part of The Wilberforce Trust) to discuss your requirements. They will assess your needs:

City of York Area:

YorSensory  
49 North Moor Road, Huntington, York, YO32 9QN  
Telephone: 01904 202292

If you live in a different council area then YorSensory will be unable to assess you, but they will still offer you advice and support.

To find out more about your local services if you live outside of the City of York, contact the North Yorkshire Sensory Team on 0845 8727374

# Getting started with your hearing aid



## Hearing aids issued

You have been issued hearing aid(s) for:

- ☐ Left ear                      ☐ Right ear                      ☐ Both ears

Your audiologist has recommended the following type of earpiece for your hearing aid:

- ☐ Slimtube                      ☐ Earmould

You have been given additional programs:

Start-up program: .....

Additional program 1: .....

Additional program 2: .....

Additional program 3: .....

Your volume control is:

- ☐ Off                      ☐ On                      ☐ N/A

Refer to the printed sheet you may have been given in clinic for further instructions specific to your hearing aid.

If you have two hearing aids, they should be colour coded for left and right. A small, coloured marker will be visible either inside the battery door compartment or on the outer casing near the battery door hinge.

**RED** indicates the **RIGHT** hearing aid

**BLUE** indicates the **LEFT** hearing aid

# Changing the battery

Your battery size is:

☐ 312 (brown)    ☐ 13 (orange)    ☐ 675 (blue)

1. Open the battery compartment



2. Remove the coloured sticker from the new battery. Place the battery in the drawer with the + symbol facing outward



3. Close battery drawer



**PLEASE NOTE:** Inserting new batteries may differ slightly with different hearing aid models, or if you have a lockable battery door.

Batteries last for up to 7 to 10 days. Beeping will sound approximately 40 minutes before they run out. Do not wait for the battery to completely run out, change it at this time - change both if you have two hearing aids

## Battery safety

### \*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE\*\*\*

In response to a **National Patient Battery Safety Alert** released on the 13/12/2019 detailing the risk of harm to young children from hearing aid batteries, we are delivering the following guidance:

Batteries can be extremely dangerous if ingested, or pushed up the nose/down the ear canal. Remember to keep your hearing aid batteries out of sight and out of reach from children and pets. This could be in a raised cabinet, or a cupboard locked with a key or child-locking mechanism. If you drop a battery then pick it up straight away.

If your child has ingested a hearing aid battery or pushed one up their nose/down their ear canal, seek immediate medical attention from the nearest Emergency Department. If your pet has ingested a hearing aid battery, seek veterinary attention as soon as possible. When changing out hearing aid batteries avoid placing the battery in your mouth or holding it between your lips. This can contaminate the battery, or more seriously lead to accidental ingestion. When the batteries run out, keep them somewhere secure and safe until such a time that you can take them to a place for safe disposal via recycling.

## How should I store my batteries?

- Store your hearing aid batteries at room temperature
- Storing batteries in hot places shortens their lifespan
- Do not store batteries in the refrigerator
- Batteries should be stored in the supplied dial packs and not carried loose in your pocket as metal objects can cause a battery to short out, leak or rupture
- The standard shelf life of a hearing aid battery is four years from the date of manufacture. The use by date will be displayed on the packet, please do not use batteries that have exceeded this date

By law, all hearing aids issued to children under the age of 5 years must be fitted with a lockable battery door. However, we extend the offer of a lockable battery door to all its patients who use hearing aids, with particular consideration to young children over the age of 5 years, parents or grandparents of young children, individuals with additional needs and individuals with dementia.

Please tick to confirm that you have had this information explained to you:

☐ Yes, I understand the risks

You have chosen to have a lockable battery door fitted:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Patient Name:.....

Hospital/NHS Number:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

## Hearing aid controls

### Turning the hearing aid OFF

Open the battery compartment so it is slightly ajar.



### Turning the hearing aid ON

Close the battery compartment fully.

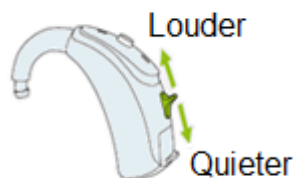
### Changing the program

You may have additional programs installed on your hearing aid (see p.13). A brief press on the push button will cycle through your programs. To get back to your start-up program, turn the hearing aid off and on again.



### Adjusting the volume control

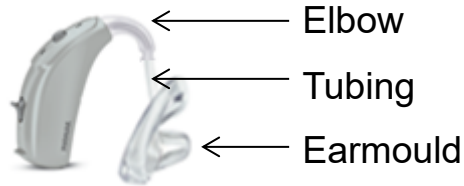
All hearing aids have an automatic volume control which adjusts depending on the listening situation you are in. You may have a manual volume control on your hearing aid (see p.13). The rocker switch allows you to make additional adjustments to make the sound more comfortable. The range of adjustment is not infinite and will be set by your





audiologist. To reset to your prescription volume, turn the hearing aid off and on again.

## **Extra Information: Hearing aids with earmoulds**



## **Inserting your hearing aid**

See our website for some videos on how to put your aid into your ear.

1. Raise the aid to your ear as shown.  
Tuck the top point of the mould into the upper fold of your ear.
2. Push the bottom half of the mould down into your ear.
3. Press the mould piece firmly into your ear. You may need to use your other hand to stretch your ear to ease fitting.
4. Hook the aid over the top of your ear.



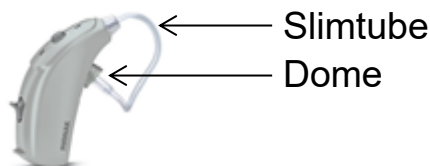
## Cleaning the earmould

- We do not recommend that you separate the tubing from the hearing aid elbow.
- Generally, we recommend that the earmould (still attached to the hearing aid) is wiped with a wet wipe every night to keep it hygienic. Do not get the aid wet.
- If you find that the tubing is blocked with water (condensation), then **gently** flick the ear mould; this should dislodge the water. Do not blow down the tubing as your breath is warm and this will lead to further condensation problems.

- If you find that the tubing is blocked with wax you may be able to remove it using a wet wipe or by picking it out with a blunt-ended pin. If not please make a repair appointment for us to retube the earmould.
- You may find that over time the part of the earmould that goes down your ear canal becomes discoloured. This is a normal reaction with your ear wax and cannot be seen by others. It does not necessarily mean that you need a new earmould.
- To clean the hearing aid itself, a wipe with dry cloth should suffice.

**Servicing:** Earmould tubing should be changed every 4-6 months. Please make a repair appointment for this

## **Extra information: Hearing aids with slimtubes**



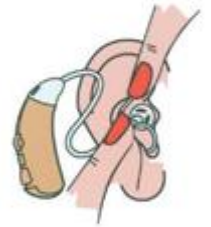
## Inserting your hearing aid

See our website for some videos on how to put your aid into your ear.

1. Hold the slimtube between the thumb and forefinger and insert the domed end of the tube into your ear canal. Gently work it into position to make sure it is firmly in your ear.



2. Take the anchor of the Slim Tube and flick it into the bowl of your ear. This will help to keep it in place.



3. Lift the hearing aid over the back of the ear to secure it into place. Turn the hearing aid on.



## Cleaning the slimtube

- Disconnect the slimtube from the hearing aid by unscrewing it anticlockwise.
- Insert the cleaning wire into the slimtube from the end that has been unscrewed from the hearing aid.
- Thread the cleaning wire all the way through the tube until it pokes out of the dome.

- Pull the cleaning wire completely through the slimtube.
- Wipe away any earwax or debris which may be stuck to the dome.
- Re-attach the slimtube to the hearing aid by screwing it on clockwise until it is tight.

Please note: Although most slimtubes screw on/off, there is one type that pushes in/pulls out. Please check with us if you are unsure.

**Servicing:** Your slimtube needs to be replaced every 6-12 months. Please make a repair appointment for this or, if you are confident enough to do this yourself, you can request a new slimtube by post. Please use the contact details on the front page of this booklet

## **What to do if your hearing aid stops working**

### **Has your hearing aid stopped amplifying sound?**

Turn the hearing aid off and on again. You may have accidentally altered the program or the volume. This should reset the aid.

If the problem persists, you could try this extra check:

- Separate the hearing aid from the earmould/slimtube (this should be done by twisting the elbow if you have an earmould). Turn the hearing aid on and cup it in your hand.
- No whistling - Try a new battery and if it still doesn't whistle, please book a repair appointment.
- It whistles - Check the slimtube/earmould tubing for signs of blockage (e.g., wax or moisture). If you cannot see a problem, then please book a repair appointment.

### **If the earmould tubing is blocked:**

- Please follow the instructions on page 19.

### **If the slimtube is blocked:**

- Please follow the instructions on page 21.

## If your hearing aid is whistling while it is in your ear:

Whistling can happen for several different reasons:

- **Is your ear full of wax?** Wax blocking your ear will cause your hearing aid to whistle. You should visit your GP or practice nurse for removal of the wax.
- **Check** that the earmould or slimtube is inserted correctly.
- **Is the earmould loose?** It should be a snug fit. If it is not, you may require a new one. Please book a repair appointment. In order for us to take an impression of your ear it needs to be totally clear of wax. Your GP or practice nurse can check this for you, otherwise you may have a wasted trip to Audiology.
- **Is the tubing hard or discoloured?** Hard tubing can crack easily and prevent effective amplification. We recommend regular tubing replacement. For earmoulds this is approximately every 4-6 months and for slimtubes every 6-12 months.

### Remember to:

- Turn the hearing aid OFF and ON
- Check for blockages
- Change the battery

# Communication tips

## Hints and tips for you:

- **Make sure you can see people's faces clearly when they are talking to you.** It is harder to lip-read when someone has their hand over their mouth or there is light shining in your face.
- **Positioning.** The best place to be is directly in front. However, if you have better hearing in one ear, then position yourself appropriately.
- **Minimise background noise.** Background noise, such as television or radio, can disrupt clarity of speech. Choosing a quieter location can be very beneficial.
- **Tell the speaker you have difficulty hearing them.** The speaker needs to be aware that you have a hearing loss before beginning a conversation so that they can adapt their communication tactics.
- **Repeat, rephrase, or write it down.** If you are finding a situation difficult, having a different strategy may make it easier for you to be included.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Nobody hears everything first time, every time. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



## Hints and tips for your family and friends:

- **Ask them to speak one at a time.** This ensures that you can face the speaker at all times. Having several speakers at once will increase background noise and will make it more difficult for you to follow the conversation.
- **Speak up, but do not shout.** Shouting does not improve clarity of speech. Instead, it can make the hearing aid create distorting sounds which reduce clarity.
- **Slow down speech and do not exaggerate words.** Slowing down the pace of the conversation can often be more helpful to someone with hearing loss than raising your voice. However, going too slow or exaggerating words can disrupt the natural rhythm of speech, making it more difficult to follow the context of the conversation. Also, exaggerated words look different when lip-reading and so may not improve their meaning.
- **Use hand gestures and facial expressions appropriately.** Non-verbal communication can support what we hear.

## Frequently asked questions

### How long will my batteries last?

Batteries should last up to 7-10 days depending on your usage and battery type. Check the expiry date on the back of the dial pack before using the battery.

### Do I have to pay for replacement batteries?

No, as long as your hearing aids were supplied by the NHS. You will be given a battery record card at your issue appointment which you should take with you whenever you go to collect batteries. You can collect batteries from the Audiology Department, as well as various other places locally such as some GP surgeries and libraries. We can also post batteries to you – you can send us an email request or request them by phone.

### What should I do if my hearing aid stops working?

Firstly try a new battery. If that doesn't work, check that the tube is not blocked. The Audiology Department's page on the Trust website has a number of resources showing you how to carry out basic repairs. See: <https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-of-services/audiology/>

If your hearing aid is still not working, please make a 15 minute repair appointment. The clinician will assess the aid and try to fix it.

## **How do I get used to wearing a hearing aid?**

You should wear your hearing aids as much as possible to give your brain chance to adjust to the sound of them, preferably from the moment you get up until the moment you go to bed. For the first few weeks you might find the experience a little unsettling but persevere, you will adjust! Processing sound is a very complex skill so ultimately, if you don't practice, you will never be very good at it! It takes the average person around 8-12 weeks to get used to new hearing aids.

## **I have had one hearing aid for a long time and now I have been given two, one for each ear. What will this feel like?**

You might remember how strange it was when you got your first hearing aid. When you get your second aid it will probably feel just as strange, but you will likely get used it quicker because your brain already knows what to expect. With two hearing aids rather than one, you may find that you're able to localize sound (tell where sound is coming from) better and maybe even hear speech in noise with more clarity.

## **Can I use my glasses and my hearing aids together?**

Yes, a large proportion of our patients wear both so this shouldn't be a problem. You may just need to be careful taking your glasses on and off.

## Can I shower or swim in my hearing aids?

No. Hearing aids are not waterproof so keep them dry at all times.

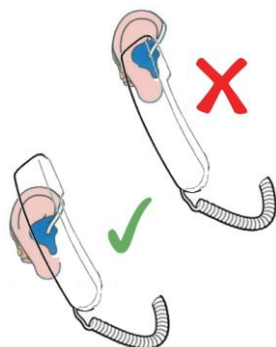
## Can I sleep with my hearing aids in?

No, you should remove your hearing aids when going to bed. Ensure they are turned off (see later in this leaflet).

## When using the phone, where is the best place to put the handset?

The microphones are on the top of the hearing aid and not near your ear canal. Position the handset nearer to the top of your ear, not down by your ear canal like you usually would. This will take practice.

You may find it useful to use a phone with a loudspeaker rather than using the handset, as then you can listen with both ears.



## Are there any listening situations that I will still struggle in, even with my hearing aids?

Your hearing aids are programmed to automatically adjust to suit the environment that you are in; however, there are limitations to the technology. Sometimes manual programs can be added to help specifically with environments that you find especially hard to hear in. These options can be discussed with your audiologist.

## What if I don't like the feel of the hearing aid in my ear?

Like with glasses, most people will find the feel of a hearing aid strange at first. With time you will most likely get used to the sensation of having something in/on your ear. If the problem persists for more than one week, and you are experiencing some discomfort from either the earpiece or the hearing aid itself, then get in touch with the Audiology Department to arrange a 15 minute repair appointment. Please do not try and modify the earpiece or hearing aid yourself. It may be that you have an allergy to the material of the earpiece, or a slightly different size may fit you better.

## What is the loop system?

The loop system is an assistive listening device that works along with your hearing aid. It may also be referred to as the telecoil, or T-system. It is often installed in public buildings such as churches, theatres, banks and supermarket tills. The aim of the loop system is to help overcome background noise.

The loop system must be activated in your hearing aid for you to be able to connect. Please speak with your audiologist if you are unsure about your settings. The loop system requires no extra wires or receivers. You can tune into the loop system where you see the sign (shown right).



## What will happen after I have had my hearing aids issued?

You will be given the option of a telephone follow up or you can post your follow up questionnaire back to us after a period of 3 months. This is a good timescale for you to get used to your hearing aid so please try not to make an appointment before then, unless your hearing aid has stopped working or you are unable to use your hearing aid for another reason.

## How often should I have my hearing retested?

You will generally be due a reassessment after having your hearing aids for 3 years. This is done on a self-referral basis. If there are more suitable hearing aids available for your hearing loss you may have your hearing aids upgraded, otherwise we will reset your current hearing aids to your new hearing test.

**Please note:** The hearing aids should not get wet. During showering, heavy rain, at the hairdressers, using hairspray etc., they should be removed to prevent damage. If the aid is damaged through negligence a charge may be incurred

## Replacement of lost or damaged hearing aids

You have been issued an NHS hearing aid/s which is yours to use for as long as you need it and is on loan from the NHS. It is your responsibility to take good care of it but if it is lost or damaged through neglect then there will be a charge prior to it being replaced.

### The charge will be £80 for each hearing aid

The charge is for the lost/damaged device and not for the new one as it still remains the property of the NHS.

You do have the right to appeal against the charge and this must be done in writing to the Head of Audiology or verbally via the PALS office. They will record the reason for appeal and e-mail this information to the Head of Audiology. Children under 18 are exempt in most situations, however repeatedly losing an aid or maliciously damaging it will incur a cost for replacement. Other exemptions may apply.

Please sign below if you understand the above conditions to your hearing aid fitting:

Patient Name:.....

Hospital/NHS Number:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

## Repair clinics

Repair clinics are held at:

York Hospital

Springhill House, Scarborough

Bridlington Hospital

Selby Hospital

Thirsk Health Centre

Malton Hospital

Whitby Community Hospital

### **All services are by appointment only**

If you wish, you may leave your hearing aid with us at York, Selby or Springhill House. We will service your aid within five working days, and we will contact you to pick it up when it is ready.

We will be able to do simple repairs such as retubing, but we may need to see you in person if we find there are complications. We will be in touch in that event to make an appointment. If you need any further advice, please contact us.



## Useful contact details

### Audiology Department York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**Tel:** 01904 726741 option 1

**Email:** yhs-tr.hearingaid.repairs@nhs.net or yhs-tr.audiologyadmin@nhs.net

**Website:** <https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-of-services/audiology/>

### Audiology Department Springhill House

19 Springhill Close, Scarborough YO12 4AD

**Tel:** 01723 342821

**Email:** yhs-tr.audiologyadmin@nhs.net

### Action on Hearing Loss (formally RNID)

Action on Hearing Loss is registered UK charity supporting individuals with hearing loss. They also have a hearing aid support service which is run by trained volunteers who can help you get the best out of your hearing aids

19-23 Featherstone Street London, EC1 Y 8SL

**Tel:** 0808 808 0123

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

## Hearing Link

Hearing Link is a UK wide charity offering support and information to hearing impaired people and their families

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

## YorSensory

YorSensory is the local social services support for hearing and visually impaired people in the City of York

49 North Moor Road, Huntington, YO32 9QN

**Tel:** 01904 202292

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

## British Tinnitus Association

The British Tinnitus Association is a registered UK charity supporting individuals with tinnitus and associated conditions

**Helpline:** 0800 018 0527

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

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

## Access to Work

Access to work is a grant offered to those who need practical support in their job. It is for people with a disability, health or mental health condition.

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Audiology Department, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726741 option 2.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

## Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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