

Patient Information Leaflet: Audiology appointments at York, Scarborough and Harrogate Hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic

We are delighted that we now have permission from the government and the Trust authorities to start re-opening Audiology services throughout York Hospital NHS Foundation Trust sites.

However, as we are still complying with the government advice on social distancing, the way in which your treatment is managed will seem very different from your experience of treatment in the department prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to limited availability of our appointments, our current priority is seeing urgent patients. If we have subsequent availability after prioritising the urgent patients then we have permission to start seeing routine patients again as long as this does not prevent the urgent patients being seen. Therefore we are sorting through all of our patients and triaging them in order of urgency, so please be patient with us.

We also need to ensure that we are not using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is required to treat urgent patients or COVID-19 patients in other parts of the hospital. Therefore, there may be occasions when your appointment is cancelled at very short notice. We apologise in advance for this and hope that you will not be inconvenienced. Please understand that this will only be done if absolutely necessary.

Please read this leaflet in full prior to attending your/your child's appointment in the Audiology department. Please ask your child to read it as well and, for younger children, please explain to them how their appointment will be different from usual.

Please note that all appointments that you may previously have been informed about have been cancelled. The appointment that has been sent with this information sheet is the only one you should attend.

Before you attend your appointment

We have put measures in place to protect both you and us during your face-to-face appointment. It is important you follow the instructions below.

Prior to your appointment being scheduled, you will have received a telephone or video call to discuss your history and the reason for your appointment. This helps us to work out if you can be treated remotely or if we require you to come into the department for a face-to-face appointment. If so, this initial call helps us to reduce the amount of time you will spend in the department. **If anything changes regarding your history or symptoms in the time between this call and your face-to-face appointment, please call us to let us know on 01904 726741.**

From the 15th June 2020, all patients and staff within hospital settings are required to wear a face covering or mask. Due to low supplies of PPE within hospitals, please bring your own. A face covering could be a scarf, a handmade mask or a certified mask that you have purchased. Very young children and adults with breathing difficulties are excluded from this requirement, but please consider trying one before deciding not to.

Please ensure you tick all the points below before attending your appointment. **If you cannot satisfy ALL the points you should not attend your appointment.** Please call us if you require any clarification.

You do not have any symptoms of coronavirus, including:	Tick
Fever/high temperature	
Shortness of breath	
Persistent cough	
Headache	
Feeling very tired	
Sore throat	
Loss of sense of smell or taste	
Nobody in your household has had any of the above symptoms in the last 14 days	
You/your child have not had diarrhoea or vomiting in the last 48 hours	
You/your child does not currently have a discharging ear infection	
You have a suitable face covering for attending your appointment	

Arriving for your appointment

Adult patients: Please attend the appointment on your own. Do not bring anyone else with you. If you require a relative to bring you to hospital, they may take you as far as the Head and Neck reception but then they must wait for you in the car or outside the hospital building on foot (maintaining a social distance of 2 metres at all times) whilst you have your appointment. There will be nowhere to wait within the hospital.

Older children: Older teenagers (16+) who are familiar with the Audiology department should attend appointments on their own. If a parent/carer has accompanied them to the hospital, they should wait in the car or outside the hospital building on foot (maintaining a social distance of 2 metres at all times). There will be nowhere to wait within the hospital.

Children and adults who require a carer: Only **ONE** parent/carer will be allowed to accompany the child/adult during their appointment. Siblings and additional relatives will not be allowed into the department. If you are an adult and require a carer to attend with you, you **MUST** inform us prior to your appointment so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Do not arrive at the department before your appointment time. The waiting area is out of use so there is nowhere for you to wait for your appointment. You should aim to arrive at reception as close to your appointment time as possible. Be aware it is roughly a 3-5 minute walk from the car park to the department at York and Scarborough Hospital.

Please ensure that you/your child have used the toilet prior to your arrival.

Please note: In order to comply with social distancing we are staggering the appointment times so that only one patient arrives in the department at any given time. **Therefore, if you are late for your appointment it may not be possible to see you/your child.** When you check in you will be asked again if you have any symptoms of coronavirus and your temperature may be checked. If the answer is no and your temperature is normal, an audiologist will come to greet you at reception and take you straight through to the clinic room.

During your appointment

As we will need to come within 2 metres of you during your appointment, the Audiologist will be wearing an apron, gloves, mask and goggles/visor. Very little of our faces will be visible, but we are still the same friendly staff that you would usually see. It may be a good idea to prepare your child so they know what to expect. We've created a fun comic strip so it's not as frightening. Go take a look! - www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/seecmsfile/?id=4711.

We understand that a lot of our patients with hearing difficulties rely on lip-reading, which will be impossible with face masks. Don't panic! We are very skilled in communicating with patients with hearing loss, and we also have other tools such as whiteboards, speech-to-text apps, virtual BSL sign language interpreters and written information to support you. Please let us know if you are struggling to communicate during your appointment and we will try an alternative method.

Following your appointment

Please leave the department immediately following your appointment. You may receive the results of your appointment on the day, or these may come as part of a written report following your appointment. For parents, a written report gets generated as a matter of course, so don't worry if you weren't able to attend the appointment in person.

Depending on the outcome of your appointment, you may receive a further appointment in the post or we may arrange a telephone/video call follow up. We will be in touch in due course. Do not contact the department to check when your appointment will be booked. Please ensure your telephone number is up to date and please also consider consenting to us having an email address contact for you, to make video calls more easily accessible.

If you have any concerns you can contact us of the details below:

Audiology (York and Scarborough) **Audiology (Harrogate)**

Telephone: 01904 726741 Telephone: 01423 553320

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