
Severe / profound deafness

What is a Severe / Profound hearing loss? What treatment is available?

Hearing impairment is defined by the quietest level of sounds you can hear; known as your hearing threshold and is measured in decibels (dB). These hearing thresholds are used to categorise your hearing as normal (no impairment), mild, moderate, severe or profound impairment. A severe hearing loss is traditionally classed as threshold levels of 71-95dB, a profound hearing loss is threshold levels in excess of 95dB. Due to the complex nature of hearing loss and complex configurations of individual audiograms Addenbrooke's severe / profound hearing loss clinic defines a severe/profound loss as threshold levels of 80dB or worse at 2kHz and 4kHz.

- 70dB is the average volume of a vacuum cleaner at a distance of 1 metre
- 90dB is the average volume of a jackhammer at a distance of 15 metres
- 100dB is the average volume of a disco speaker at a distance of 1 metre

Patients with severe / profound hearing loss usually need to lip-read or use sign language, even with a hearing aid.

The aim of the Severe/ Profound Hearing Loss Clinic is to ensure adult patients with severe or profound hearing loss are optimally managed in terms of amplification, wider audiological rehabilitation and onward referral for cochlear implant assessment where appropriate.

Emmeline Centre information on Cochlear Implants

What to expect at your appointment?

The first appointment is an assessment to discuss the history of the hearing loss, the current difficulties experienced with hearing and any other related symptoms. If a 'standard' hearing test has not been performed recently this will be completed along with additional specialist hearing tests if appropriate.

Further appointments will then be arranged to optimise your ear moulds and hearing aid settings, as well as providing advice on communication tactics, assistive listening devices and other services (such as sensory services team and access to work).

How to get an appointment/ referral criteria

You will need a referral if you would like to be seen on the Severe/ Profound Hearing Loss Clinic, this can be arranged via your audiologist or ENT consultant.