
Hearing therapy and assistive listening devices

The Hearing Therapy service is provided by audiologists who specialise in helping patients make the most of their hearing and hearing aids through the use of communication tactics, lip-reading and assistive listening devices. They work with the patient, their relatives and carers, hearing aid audiologists, Social Services Departments and Disability Employment Advisors to develop an individual rehabilitation programme based on the patient's communication needs.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) Clinic

Some patients find assistive listening devices can improve their hearing in specific situations. The ALDs Clinic can demonstrate and offer information about all types of assistive listening devices, which are available to help with hearing in the home or work, including devices to help hear the TV, doorbell and telephone. Some devices can be provided by your local Social Services Department, although this can be subject to certain criteria. Addenbrooke's has a limited selection of products that can be used for a temporary trial if you wish to try the product before you purchase it.

For people who are of working age and are having hearing-related problems in the working environment, the ALDs Clinic can help maximise your hearing potential at work. Funding through a government scheme can sometimes help provide necessary equipment at work, which we can help you arrange via the Disability Employment Advisor (see the patient information leaflet - Access to work).

What to expect at your appointment

The appointment will usually last 45 minutes. The audiologist will ask you about your hearing difficulties and any equipment you currently use. You will then have the opportunity to discuss options to help you hear better and try some equipment including telephones, television listening devices and personal listening devices. The audiologist will explain how to obtain the equipment either through referral to social services (subject to meeting certain criteria) or explaining how to buy the equipment. In some cases we are able to loan personal listening devices for a few weeks for you to try at home and we usually arrange a separate 30 minute appointment for arranging loan equipment. This is subject to availability as

supplies are very limited.

Hearing Therapy Clinic

The Hearing Therapy Clinic provides counselling for people with longstanding hearing loss, people who have functionally normal hearing but experience listening difficulties in everyday life and those who have acquired hearing loss through age, Meniere's Disease, trauma or surgery. This counselling helps people to come to terms with their hearing loss and to develop new strategies and ways of dealing with situations. It also helps them develop ways of helping themselves and maximising their communication abilities. Communication training is provided for individuals, families and friends to encourage changes in communication strategies and to acquire better skills in using residual hearing.

What to expect at your appointment

Your initial appointment will last up to 1 hour. The audiologist will talk to you about your hearing problems, ear symptoms, your medical background and your communication needs to help tailor the treatment to meet your individual needs.

Lip-reading and Communication courses

Communication courses look at communication as a general topic and usually cover hearing loss, strategies for dealing with situations, lip-reading, assertiveness, assistive-listening devices, general information and pointers to other help that is available. They also provide a useful forum for people to meet others who are in a similar position to share experiences and learn from them. The course is open to all Addenbrooke's Audiology patients and is usually run on an annual basis. If you would like further information about the next course please contact the audiology department directly.

Lip-reading can be a useful additional skill for those that are hard of hearing. It can be a struggle to clearly make out everyday conversation, particularly in noisy situations, even when wearing hearing aids. Learning how to recognise the lip patterns for different speech sounds and make use of people's expressions and gestures allows you to make better use of the available visual cues to support your hearing in difficult situations.

How to get an appointment/ referral criteria

An appointment with a member of the Hearing Therapy team or Assistive Listening Devices Team can be arranged through referral from an Addenbrooke's ENT consultant or an Addenbrooke's Audiologist.