

Hearing Aid Follow Up Leaflet

Additional information for
patients about their hearing
aids

Managing Expectations

When hearing aids are fitted for the first time, they can be overwhelming to adapt to. You may notice that your own voice is very loud or hollow and feel like you are shouting. We refer to this as the 'Occlusion Effect'. Your brain has identified that your ears are now blocked by the hearing aids and focuses on that sensation, causing your voice to sound different. As you wear your hearing aids more, your brain will adapt to the new sensation and will filter the sound out of your awareness, and your voice should become more natural sounding in time. To give an example of this filtering out system, imagine a person who moves into a house on a busy road. At first that person is very aware of the sound of the cars outside. However, after some time they have stopped noticing the cars outside. This is because their brain has filtered out the sounds it does not need to focus on. This process can vary from person to person but should resolve after a few weeks of wearing the hearing aids consistently.

When hearing aids are first fitted you will hear environmental sounds around you as well as improved speech. It can be very distracting at first, as you may not be used to hearing these sounds at this level. When hearing aids are used regularly, environmental sounds that were first very noticeable should settle and as we learn to pay less attention. If you use your hearing aids only occasionally, you will not learn to filter these sounds. It is important to try and wear your hearing aids every day to help yourself adjust to the new information that you hear.

You may find in noisy environments that you struggle to hear the person you are speaking to. Hearing in noisy environments is a common challenge for people, where the brain and the ear work together to interpret sounds. If you have a hearing impairment this can make that process more challenging. There are ways that you can help to manage this. Be aware of where you are sitting, try to sit around the edges of the room instead of in the centre as the acoustics will be better there. Try to make sure that you are sitting within 1.5m of the person you want to hear as hearing aids work better over short distances. There are also additional programmes that can be added to your hearing aid to help improve speech in noisier places and additional accessories that can be bought to assist in loud environments. These will be discussed in more detail later in the booklet.

Hearing Loss Categories

An individual's hearing loss can be sorted into 4 different categories:

Mild

A person with a mild hearing loss may find they hear conversation, and sounds around them comfortably, but lack clarity on speech which can make it difficult to understand what is being said. People may find they respond incorrectly or mishear what is being said. A hearing aid can help amplify soft sounds making speech much clearer.

Moderate

A person with a moderate hearing loss may find there are sounds they don't hear at all and can struggle in conversation. Hearing aids can significantly improve communication in most settings, although noisy backgrounds may still pose challenges.

Severe

An individual with a severe hearing loss will struggle to pick up on sounds in general and can find conversation very difficult. These individuals may benefit from stronger powered hearing aids which can amplify sounds more substantially, but they may find they still rely on visual clues such as lip reading.

Profound

Someone with a profound hearing loss will pick up limited sounds around them. Hearing aids may provide limited assistance, however for these individuals cochlear implants or other assistive listening devices, along with sign language or lip reading could be more effective.

It is important to have realistic expectations of what hearing aids can achieve, while they can greatly enhance your listening experience hearing aids are unable to restore normal hearing and work best when combined with other communication strategies.

Adjusting to hearing aids

When first issued hearing aids, people will go through an acclimatisation process where they gradually adjust to the amplified sounds. For this process to be effective the hearing aids need to be worn consistently each day. Below are some key tips on how to adapt to the new sounds you are hearing:

- Wear the hearing aids every day: The hearing aids should be worn for a few hours a day at a minimum to adjust to the sounds more quickly.
- Read aloud: Your own voice may sound quite hollow initially, try reading a magazine or book aloud to help get used to hearing your own voice. This should stop the sound being so overwhelming.

- Expect noise: Initially everything may sound noisy but over time the brain learns to tune out distracting sounds
- Use your volume control: If you have a volume control enabled on your hearing aids (please refer to your first fit book for details on your hearing aid set up) use this to adjust the hearing aids to comfortable levels as needed in different environments.

Communication Advice

The best conditions for listening

Your listening environment can affect your ability to hear speech clearly. This can sometimes explain why you may hear better in certain places. A room with soft furnishings, such as carpets, curtains and cushions, provides a better listening environment as these absorb sound reducing reverberation. You are more likely to be able to understand speech better in your living room than you would in your kitchen. Generally, kitchens have lots of hard surfaces and larger windows; these make it harder for you to understand speech.

It is important to reduce the background noise where possible. A tablecloth may lessen the noise of plates clattering, or a large rug on wooden flooring will absorb more of the noises around the home. Socially, sitting in the corner of the room; positioning yourself away from sources of additional noise e.g. where food and drinks are being served and moving away from loudspeakers playing music can help reduce intrusive background sounds.

Ways to improve your communication

When a person speaks, clues are gained not only from what is heard but also from what is seen. These clues help us to follow a conversation.

For people with hearing loss the visual clues of speech become very important. To maximise this, consider the following:

- Make sure the room is well lit.
- Have your back to the light source e.g. the window, so that the light falls on the speakers face. Sitting with the light in your face means you strain to see and it's tiring.
- Make sure you can see the speakers face. Looking down or sitting where you cannot see their face can make it difficult to use any lip-reading skills that you may have adopted. You may be surprised at the number of clues you can pick up without realising.
- Position yourself 1-2m away as lip-reading is difficult if the speaker is too near or too far away
- Make sure your eyesight is recently checked.
- Do not let yourself get too tired or tense as you will be able to lip-read better if you are relaxed. You may miss things in conversation, don't be too hard on yourself. Keep engaged and keep trying!

Helpful Communication Tactics

It is important to remember that communication is a two-way process. Your family and friends are also responsible in communicating effectively with you. To enhance communication, ask your family and friends to:

- **Attract your attention before speaking** – not attracting your attention means that you are likely to miss the start of a conversation. Ask family and friends to call you name, and mentally count to three before they start to speak. This allows you enough time to focus your attention on the conversation.
- **Tell you the subject of the conversation** – Without first knowing the subject, you may fail to attach any meaning to what you think you may have lip-read or heard. This is useful in a group conversation when the topic of conversation frequently changes.
- **Get to the point** – Try to make the subject of the conversation as clear as possible.
- **Ask people to face you** - by keeping their heads fairly still and their mouth visible you can clearly see their lip movements. Avoid speaking from another room, or with your head in a cupboard/newspaper/book.
- **Minimise background noise** – Background noise can impair your ability to discriminate speech. Try to avoid conversation in the kitchen when the kettle is boiling or when the washing machines or extractor fan is on. These household sounds are likely to affect your ability to listen well.
- **Speak clearly** – Clear speech can be distorted by exaggerating, shouting, laughing, mumbling or with food or objects in the mouth. Speak too softly and you may hear too little, just as shouting can be too painful and will distort clear speech.
- **Use natural hand gestures** - but do not exaggerate. Unnecessary hand movements can be very distracting.
- **Repeat, re-phrase or write down the message** – if you have not understood be confident to ask for the important facts to be written down.

Programmes

Your hearing aids can support additional programmes that may help in different situations. Below is a description of some of the programmes that can be added to your hearing aids:

All Around: Use as your default program. Good for listening in multiple situations, or if you only want one program.

Hear in Noise/ Restaurant: Use if struggling in noisier environments. The directional microphones may help reduce some background awareness.

Outdoor: Use when you are outdoors: walking, cycling or driving.

Music: Use when listening to music at home or at an indoor concert.

Acoustic Phone: Use when using a landline phone.

Loop

Another programme that can be added to your hearing aid is the Loop setting.

What is a hearing loop?



A hearing loop (sometimes called an audio induction loop) is a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids. The hearing loop provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.

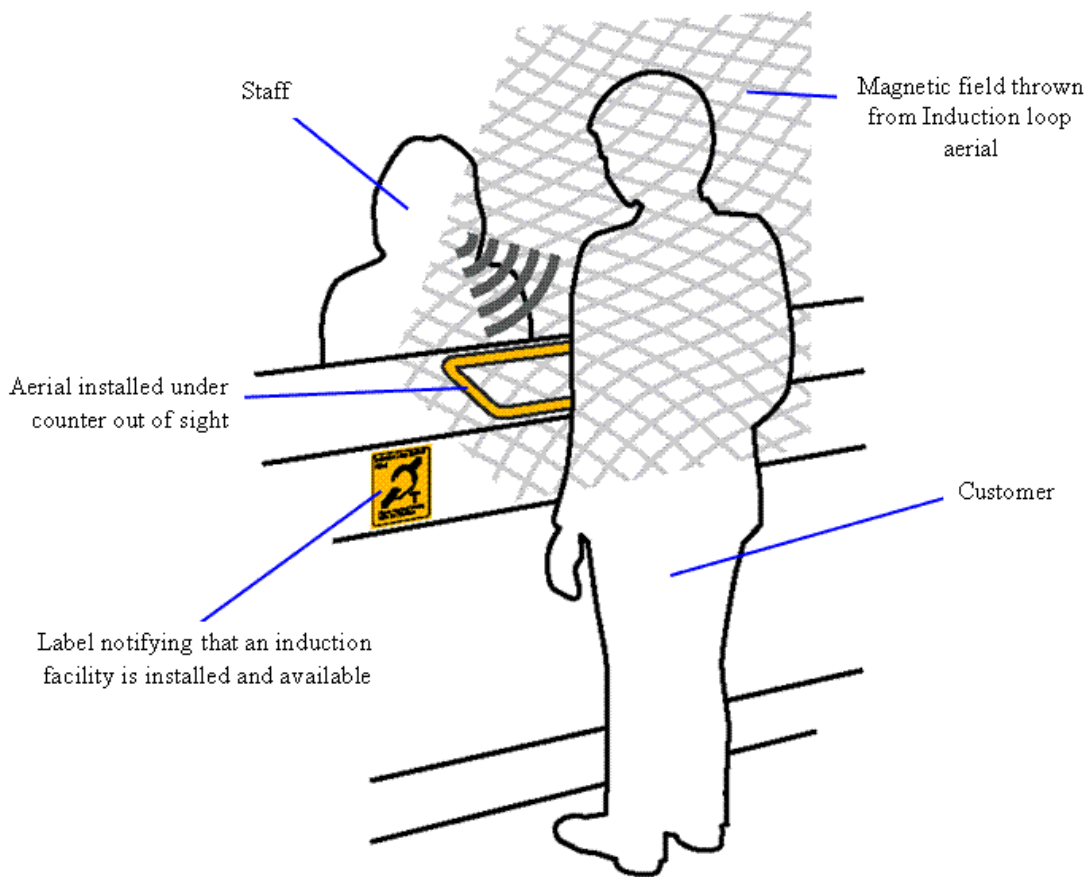
The hearing loop consists of a microphone to pick up the spoken word; an amplifier which processes the signal which is then sent through the final piece; the loop cable, a wire placed around the perimeter of a specific area i.e. a meeting room, a church, a service counter etc to act as an antenna that radiates the magnetic signal to the hearing aid.

Why use a hearing loop?

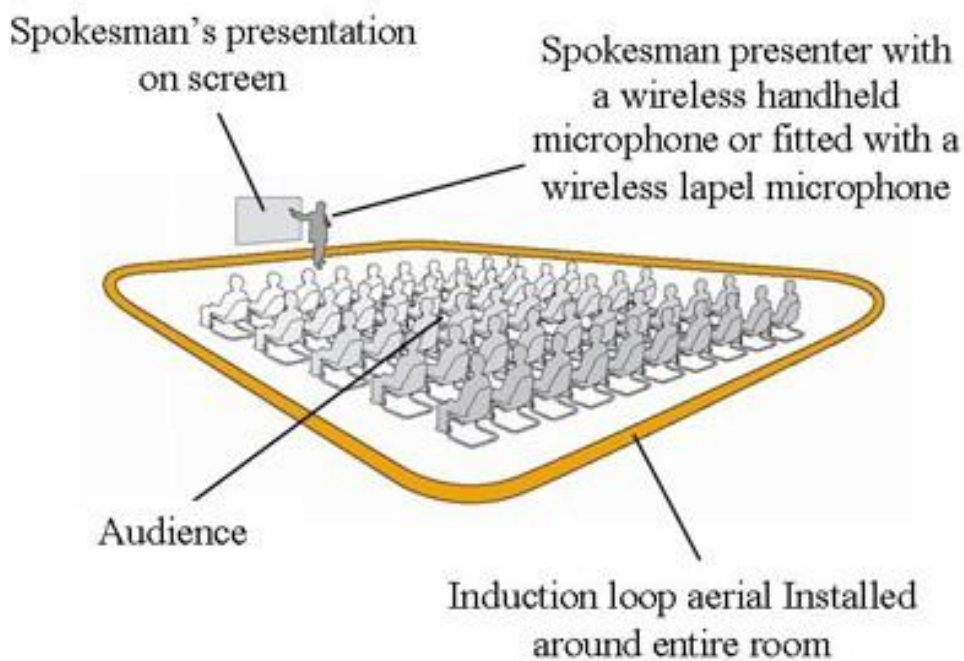
- Cuts out unwanted background noise
- No need to use a receiver/headset
- Sound goes directly into the hearing aid
- Can be used by anyone with a compatible hearing aid
- It is inconspicuous
- Cost effective
- Any number of users can use the system

Source: <https://www.hearinglink.org/living/loops-equipment/hearing-loops/what-is-a-hearing-loop/>

Below is a diagram of a hearing loop at a shop counter or bank



Below is a diagram of a room hearing loop (e.g. at an event, place of worship etc)



Using a hearing aid on the loop "T" Setting

A telecoil is a small coil inside a hearing aid. **The coil works as a small receiver which picks up signals from a loop system that acts as an electromagnetic field.** Hearing aids with an activated telecoil can convert this electromagnetic field into a sound signal.

To access the loop system using a hearing aid a loop programme needs to be added to your hearing aids. If you require further help and advice, please ask your Audiologist.

Assistive Listening Devices

There is additional equipment that can be purchased to help you manage your hearing alongside your hearing aids. Some examples of these are given below:

Phones: There are phones that can work with loop settings or have loudspeakers for people who are hard of hearing. Some phones have flashing lights or large buttons to help individuals who have problems with both their eyesight and their hearing.

Alarm clocks: Alarm clocks that flash or vibrate to alert the individual

Paging systems: These can be set up to alert you to a range of different devices such as a smoke alarm, alarm clock or baby monitor

Personal Loop Systems: these are loop systems that can either be installed around a room at home or a neck loop system that the wearer wears around their neck.

For further information or to purchase these devices, you can check:

www.connevans.co.uk

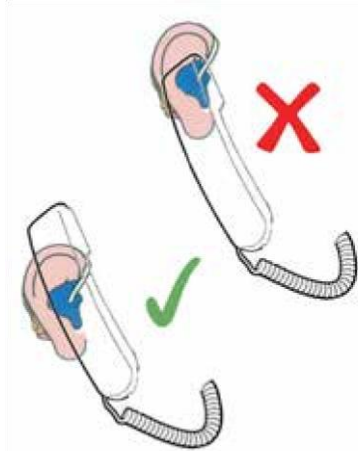
www.rnid.org.uk

www.hearinglink.org.uk

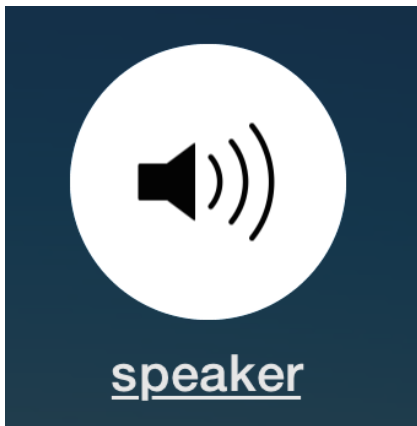
These are also available at various high street stores or online. If you would like to discuss these options, please speak to an Audiologist.

Phone Use

Phones can be difficult to use with hearing aids. It is instinct to hold a phone to your ear, however because the ear is now blocked by the hearing aid you may not hear very well. The phone receiver needs to be aligned with the hearing aid microphones which sit at the top of the hearing aid. Please see below diagram:



You may find that you hear better when using your phone on the loudspeaker setting, as this will enable both ears to pick up the sound. If you are using a mobile look for the speaker icon when you answer the call. Some Landlines also have a speaker option.

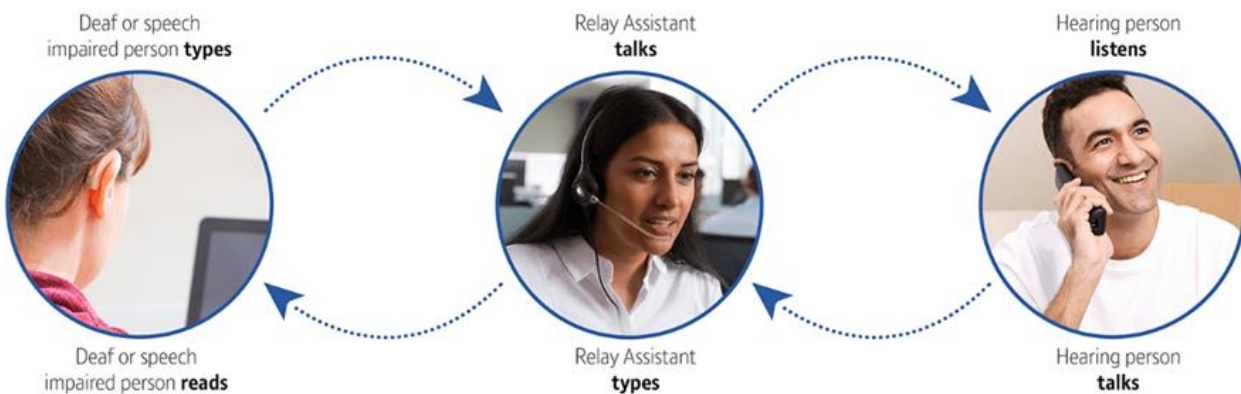


Most mobile phones are loop compatible, as well as all BT handsets. If you have a loop setting on your hearing aid, try activating this when you next take a call, and this may improve the sound.

Relay UK

Some severe to profoundly deaf people may benefit from using a relay app such as Relay UK. This uses a 'relay assistant' to type what the person on the other end of the call is saying, which the hearing-impaired person can then read, and respond to the relay assistant who then passes this back to the other person.

A typical call using Relay UK



To

find out more go to: www.relayuk.bt.com

BeMore app



If you have an Ambio hearing aid (please check your first fit leaflet for details on what hearing aid you have been issued) these can work with an app that can be downloaded onto most mobile phones. The app will allow you to control your hearing aid programmes, adjust the volume, and make small adjustments using various filters to help improve sound quality. To check if your mobile is compatible with the app please check this link: www.danalogic.co.uk/apps/bemore-app and check the compatibility section.

How to Connect Your Hearing Aids to the BeMore Smartphone App on Android Platform

1. Ensure your model of smartphone is compatible by checking www.userguides.gnhearing.com
2. Insert fresh batteries but keep your hearing aids switched off by leaving the battery drawers open
3. Go to settings on your phone and ensure Bluetooth is turned on




4. Go to the Google Play Store
5. Search for 'BeMore Smartphone App'
6. Tap "Install" to start downloading the app
7. Once the app has downloaded click "Open" and then at the bottom right of the screen "Get Started"
8. You will be taken through instructions on restarting your hearing aids to connect them to the app, please follow these



The app will populate with the data as programmed by your Audiologist and is ready to use. Pairing only needs to be done once, the devices will automatically reconnect when turned on and in range of the active smartphone.

Note: To stream audio (e.g. phone calls or music), a PhoneClip+ accessory is required.

How to Download the BeMore Smartphone App on iPhone iOS Platform

1. Ensure your model of smartphone is compatible by checking www.userguides.gnhearing.com
2. Insert fresh batteries but keep your hearing aids switched off by leaving the battery drawers open
3. Go to settings on your phone and ensure Bluetooth is turned on
4.  Go to the Apple App Store
5. Search for 'BeMore for your hearing aids'
6. If you are using an iPad, change the filters in the top left-hand corner to 'Supports iPad Only'
7. Tap "Get" to start downloading the app
8. Once the app has downloaded click "Open" and then at the bottom right of the screen "Get Started"
9. You will be asked "BeMore Would Like to Use Bluetooth" click "Ok"



10. You will be taken through instructions on restarting your hearing aids to connect them to the app, please follow these



The app will populate with the data as programmed by your Audiologist and is ready to use. Pairing only needs to be done once, the devices will automatically reconnect when turned on and in range of the active smartphone.

Note: To stream audio (e.g. phone calls or music), a PhoneClip+ accessory is required.

If you have problems with the BeMore app, please go to the Patient Portal at www.danalogic.co.uk/patient-portal

Phonak App

Some patients may have been issued Phonak hearing aids. Phonak aids can work with the Phonak app called 'MyPhonak'. The hearing aids currently compatible with the app are: Phonak Boloro M, Nova M, Naida M70 SP, Naida P70 UP. There are also the paediatric Marvel range which works with the My Phonak Junior app.

Additional Accessories

Danalogic GN's wireless accessories stream sound directly to your hearing devices. These devices can address various issues that hearing aid users may experience. Listed below are some of the devices available to be purchased from GN Resound. Speak to your audiologist if you would like to discuss which additional accessories will work best for you.

Micro Mic and Multi Mic:



Micro Mic Benefits:

- Sound can be streamed from up to 25 metres away with clear line of sight
- Up to 10 hours of talk time per battery charge

- 3-hour charge
- Discreet design
- Easy to pair
- Our 2.4GHz accessories can be added at any time without the need for software programming
- Rechargeable

Multi Mic offers you all of the above plus:

- Up to 11 hours of talk time per battery charge
- Can also be used as a table mic, you can hear everyone around it.
- Connects to FM and Loop systems
- Has a mini-jack input for streaming audio from virtually any device with a headphone output, including smart TVs.

Phone Clip+



Benefits:

- Up to 6 hours of talk time and 80 hours of standby time
- A mute button to reduce all other surrounding sounds so you can concentrate on your call
- Simultaneous connection to two Bluetooth devices

(such as phone and tablet)

- Easy-to-use remote control functionality for your hearing devices
- Quality stereo sound when streaming music
- Private and secure connection
- Call reject and transfer, last number dial and voice dial functions

-   Rechargeable

- Charge time - 3hrs

TV Streamer 2

Benefits:

- Delivers stereo sound directly to hearing devices without the need for any additional device around the neck
- Easy to use
- Very discreet
- More than one user at a time can connect to the same



Remote Control and Remote Control 2



Remote Control Benefits:

- The large tactile buttons on the Remote Control make switching settings and adjusting the volume simpler than ever
- Easy to use
- Adjust volume of hearing devices together or individually
- Change hearing device programs

Remote Control 2 Benefits:

- Adjust volume of hearing devices together or individually
- Change hearing device programs
- Start streaming programs and control balance of the hearing device volume and streamer volume
- Reduce surrounding sounds with the mute button

To purchase wireless accessories for your hearing devices visit:

www.wirelesshearing.co.uk Password: Unite

Please remember to enter the hospital code (PU00249-004) or hospital name during the checkout process.

Phonak Accessories

Patients who have been issued with a Phonak hearing aid can also purchase additional devices such as the Phonak Roger system and the PartnerMic system.



These can be purchased from various places such as Connevans, GordonMorris and other High Street Retailers.

Accessing the Service

For any help or further information, you can access the service via our walk-in clinics. These clinics are located at **The Royal Gwent Hospital** in Newport, **Nevill Hall Hospital** in Abergavenny and **Ysbwty Ystrad Fawr** in Ystrad Mynach. The clinics run Monday to Friday except for bank holidays, 9am until 12pm.

You can also text, email or ring the department on the following:

Telephone: 0300 303 5651

Test Only: 07814610009

Email: ABB.GwentRGHAud@wales.nhs.uk

We also have a website which has information regarding hearing aids and the clinics: abuhb.nhs.wales/audiology and an online battery order system: abuhb.nhs.wales/batteries

Local Support Groups

Deafblind UK's Newport social group

For people who have either hearing and/or visual impairment.

3rd Friday of the month from 1:30-3:30pm

Location: The Salvation Army, 1 Hill Street, NP20 1LZ.

Useful Links

- **RNID in Wales**

Information Line, RNID, 9 Bakewell Road,
Orton Southgate, Peterborough, PE2 6XU

Email: wales@rnid.org.uk **Helpline:** 0808 808 0123

- **Hearing Link**

Hearing Link is a UK wide charity offering support and information to people with hearing loss and their families **website:** www.hearinglink.org

- **Tinnitus UK**

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
Website: 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

- **Disabled Students Allowance**

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is support to cover the study-related costs you have because of a mental health problem, long-term illness or any other disability. This can be on its own or in addition to any student finance you get. The type of support and how much you get depends on your individual needs - not your household income.

You do not need to pay back DSA.

Website: www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa

- **Lipreading**

This site presents free lipreading video clips and written exercises.

Website: www.lipreadingpractice.co.uk

- **British Sign Language Course**

There are funded courses available for BSL levels 1,2 and 3 via ALS training. These courses are located at

ALS Training,
Ocean Park House,
East Tyndall Street,
Cardiff,
CF24 5ET

The courses are fully fundable if the learner can meet the following eligibility:

- Live in the Capital Region or
- Live in Wales and work in the Capital region

The Capital region is the 10 Local authorities in the region (Bridgend, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Merthyr, Cardiff, Newport, Monmouth, RCT, Blaenau Gwent, Vale of Glamorgan).

- **Ffrind i Mi** (Friend of Mine)

Run by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and its partners to offer volunteer befriending services to anyone who feels lonely or isolated. **Helpline:** 01495 768 645

Email: ffrindimi.abb@wales.nhs.uk

Website: www.ffrindimi.co.uk

- **Danalogic Patient Portal**

This is a website run by the company who makes the GN hearing aids that we issue. It has lots of useful links regarding how to use the aids and further information about the app and accessories.

Website: www.danalogic.co.uk/patient-portal

There are various companies that sell additional accessories including:

www.connevans.co.uk

Gordonmorris.co.uk

www.hearinglink.org.uk

Hearing and Balance Unit/ Audiology Department

For more information, please contact:

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Telephone: 0300 303 5651 Monday to Friday (9am until 12.30pm)

Email: ABB.GwentRGHAud@wales.nhs.uk

Text only: 07814 610 009

Website: abuhb.nhs.wales/audiology

Online Battery order: abuhb.nhs.wales/batteries

**This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**