

Information about your tinnitus & hearing assessment appointment

Gwent Audiology Service

Introduction

This information leaflet outlines the care that you will receive when you attend the Audiology Department for your tinnitus and hearing assessment.

We will assume your consent to have any of these procedures carried out when you attend the appointment. Please feel free to say during the appointment if you do not wish the tests to continue.

We actively encourage you to bring a friend or family member to all appointments. Please inform us using the contact details on your appointment letter, or when you arrive in the clinic if you would prefer to be seen on your own.

If you need any communication support, please contact the department with details of your preferred language and we will do our best to arrange this for you, you can contact us via phone, text, or email. The details on how to contact us are included with your appointment letter.

Your appointment will be with a fully qualified Audiologist who has experience in taking a suitable medical history in relation to your tinnitus and hearing, undertaking the appropriate clinical tests and devising your individual management plan.

During your appointment

The audiologist will ask you questions relating to your ears and hearing to understand the problems that you are facing with your tinnitus and hearing. It is important that you explain the reasons why you have come for an assessment so that the audiologist can tailor the appointment to your needs. The Audiologist will also discuss the situations in which your tinnitus and hearing is causing a problem. This information will help us to decide how we can support you.

Hearing tests

The Audiologist will carry out a hearing test. You will be asked to listen to sounds through headphones placed over your ears and respond when you hear them. The Audiologist can then assess the quietest sounds which you are able to hear.

You may also need a further test to check the movement of your ear drum. If so, a small tip will be placed in each ear in turn and a puff of air will be blown into your ear. This procedure should not cause any discomfort, but your ear will feel blocked while the test is carried out.

Remember, we assume you are consenting to have these tests carried out when you attend the appointment. Please feel free to say during the appointment if you do not wish the tests to continue.

Results of these tests

Once we have discussed your hearing test results, we will then discuss how best we can support you with your tinnitus management. This may include a referral to an Audiologist who specializes in tinnitus support.

If you have a hearing loss the Audiologist will explain how wearing a hearing aid will be helpful. We can help you to decide whether you would like to use a hearing aid. Research studies suggest that use of hearing aids will help you manage your tinnitus. By improving your hearing, you will gain greater awareness of everyday sounds, and this can help distract you from listening to your tinnitus.

If you decide to have a hearing aid the Audiologist will then discuss the most suitable type of earpiece fitting, depending on the type of hearing loss that you have. There are two types of ear pieces that are used:

- A made to measure earmould. This will involve the Audiologist placing a small sponge into your ear canal followed by some soft material which will set within a couple of minutes. We will then remove the impression material and sponge from your ear.
- There should be no discomfort from this procedure but your ear will feel blocked while the impression material is in the ear canal. We will use this impression to make an earmould which is individually fitted for your ear.
- “Open ear fitting” a slim tube with a soft earpiece that will be measured to fit correctly.

Based on the information that you have supplied the Audiologist and the results of the hearing test; we will discuss how the hearing aid will help you. This will then be written up to form part of your Individual Management Plan. This plan will outline how the hearing aid will help you in your daily life.

The hearing aids fitted in NHS clinics fit behind the ear and the Audiologist will show you one of these. We will send you an appointment for the fitting of the hearing aid within 11 weeks.

Occasionally the Audiologist may feel that a referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat Doctor would be useful and will explain to you why this is necessary.

If the hearing test results show normal hearing, or you decide not to go ahead with hearing aid(s) there are many ways to help you manage your tinnitus. If you need further help and support, you will be referred to an Audiologist who specializes in tinnitus management.

During the appointment, if there is anything that you are unsure about, please do not hesitate to ask.

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