



SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HAVE HEARING LOSS

A summary to the care pathway for people who use services across Northern Ireland to address and manage their hearing.

BACKGROUND

This leaflet has been created to provide anyone who has experienced a hearing loss with information about the care pathway for services and support for anyone who is d/Deaf*, hard of hearing or experiences tinnitus.

This pathway is the product of several years of listening, engagement, and collaborative working in both formal and informal meetings and conversations. The document has been delivered by the Regional Sensory Impairment Group, which brings together service users, community and voluntary sector organisations, and Health and Social Care professionals to focus on improving services and support for people with sensory disabilities. The members of the group are experts by experience, practice, and training. The group was established under the Regional Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15/18.

We are pleased to share this pathway with people who use services across Northern Ireland to address and manage their hearing loss, tinnitus, or related challenges. It has been designed with you and your families and carers in mind, to support your journey.

Alternative Formats

This leaflet can be made available upon request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format. Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to:

Strategic Planning and Performance Group,
12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS

Email: SPPGcommunications@hscni.net

For an alternative format, please contact: Communications Department,
Telephone: 028 9536 3020

* Please see Page 7 for definition.

GLOSSARY

Advocacy	Getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called your advocate.
Befriending	Signpost to other agencies who will provide support and advice i.e. Community Navigator, Community Access Support Worker, Age Concern.
Cochlear Implants	A highly advanced medical device which is an alternative to hearing aids for people who no longer benefit from them. It bypasses the damaged part of the ear and uses electrical stimulation to enable you to hear. There are two parts, the internal implant and the external sound processor. (This requires a surgical procedure).
Communication Support for hearing	A way of helping you see/read information in a way suitable for you. This could be by braille, using good lighting or magnifiers.
Emotional Support	One to one support with your emotional wellbeing to help you comes to terms with the impact of your hearing loss.
Employment advice	Support and information that is available for those with a hearing impairment. This is available from agencies such as RNID, Access to Work and NDCS. They can also advise on or provide equipment that can be of assistance within the workplace.
ENT Consultant	ENT Consultants are Doctors who specialise in the diagnosis and treatment of ear, nose and throat conditions. They can help by working to discover the cause of the deafness or hearing difficulty. They can also prescribe a hearing aid if appropriate, and recommend specific treatments and support.
Hearing aid maintenance	Hearing aids require maintenance. This may include things such as cleaning the ear piece, re-tubing the hearing aid or making adjustments to settings.

Information and Advice	Information about your hearing condition, equipment, groups or organisations to help you make the right choice about the training, care and support you need.
Lip reading	Means of communicating/conversing with someone with a hearing impairment by studying the shape and movement of their lips and face.
Peer to Peer Support	Meeting people who have similar hearing problems to share their experiences and learn from each other.
Provision of equipment	Equipment may be provided following needs-based assessment; this may include items such as a specialist smoke alarm or TV listening device.
Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation aims to promote independence and improve quality of life. This can be achieved by provision of equipment, doing something in a different way, talking and learning from other people in a similar position to you.
SDS	Self-Directed Support is a way of providing social care support that empowers individuals to have informed choice about how support is provided to them with a focus on working together to achieve individual outcomes. Self-Directed Support enables individuals to choose how their support is provided and gives them as much control as they want over their Personal Budget.
Tinnitus support	Tinnitus support includes providing information on tinnitus, coping techniques and signposting to other services and organisations. Sound equipment may also be provided.

10 ways the care pathway can make a positive difference for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing

The positive impact that the care pathway aims to deliver is summarised below, from the point of view of people who have experienced that positive difference in their lives:

1. I understand/acknowledge my hearing loss, Deafness or tinnitus and I will know what to expect after I am diagnosed. This information should be available whenever individuals visit their GPs, Audiologist or ENT Consultant. I also know that when I have my appointment I should have access to appropriate communication support.
2. I have someone to talk to. Many individuals living with hearing loss, Deafness or tinnitus can often feel lonely or isolated. Staff from both statutory and voluntary organisations should be available to provide appropriate and timely information / support.
3. I can learn to improve my quality of life. Once diagnosed there are many services available to help individuals improve the quality of their lives and these services are accessible through statutory and voluntary organisations.
4. I can look after myself, my health, my home and my family. Individuals who receive advice and support will be much better informed about improving lifestyles particularly about techniques for managing their hearing loss and/or tinnitus.
5. I receive statutory benefits, information and support I need. Individuals who have difficulties with communication may be entitled to receive some benefits to help improve the quality of their life.
6. I can access information making the most of the advantages that technology brings. Statutory and voluntary organisations provide advice and information about a range of developing technology which can lead to improved access.
7. I can get out and about. Individuals with the help of support and advice find that they grow in confidence because of improved communication and engage more widely with their local communities.
8. I have the tools, skills and confidence to communicate. Improved communication and technological support enables individuals to develop and improve their skills.
9. I have equal access to education and lifelong learning. Individuals with hearing loss are entitled to equal access to any of our local training and employment opportunities.
10. I can work and volunteer. Individuals who have a hearing loss and/or tinnitus often feel that they would like to share their experiences with others and many can use the experience of volunteering to offer this support.

Objectives

This care pathway provides information about the care you can expect from professionals and organisations that are here to support you to manage your hearing loss. It explains the roles and responsibilities of the different service providers that you will encounter. It gives you contact details for relevant professional teams and support networks in both the health and social care and the community and voluntary sector.

From the point of view of the different service providers who will be involved with you on your journey: this care pathway is a resource to help them deliver a consistent and standardised approach to managing your care.

Our collective goal is to ensure that individuals, families, and carers are at the heart of the process. Also, a professional assessment of your needs which is person-centred and holistic will be completed.

Scope of the Care Pathway

This care pathway reflects the care needs of people have hearing loss, are Deaf or experience tinnitus.

The pathway also reflects specialist services which may be required to support:

- Individuals requiring specialist Mental Health and Deafness support
- Individuals who are d/Deafblind (dual loss)

Definitions: hearing loss and hearing difficulties

This care pathway is for anyone who has experienced hearing loss or hearing difficulties.

This may include, but is not limited to, the following conditions:

d/Deaf

The word deaf is used to describe or identify anyone who has a severe hearing problem. Sometimes it is used to refer to people who are severely hard of hearing too.

We use Deaf with a capital D to refer to people who have been deaf all their lives, or since before they started to learn to talk. They are pre-lingually deaf. It is an important distinction, because Deaf people tend to communicate in sign language as their first language. For most Deaf people English is a second language, and understanding complicated messages in English can be a problem.

There is a very strong and close Deaf community with its own culture and sense of identity, based on a shared language.

Tinnitus

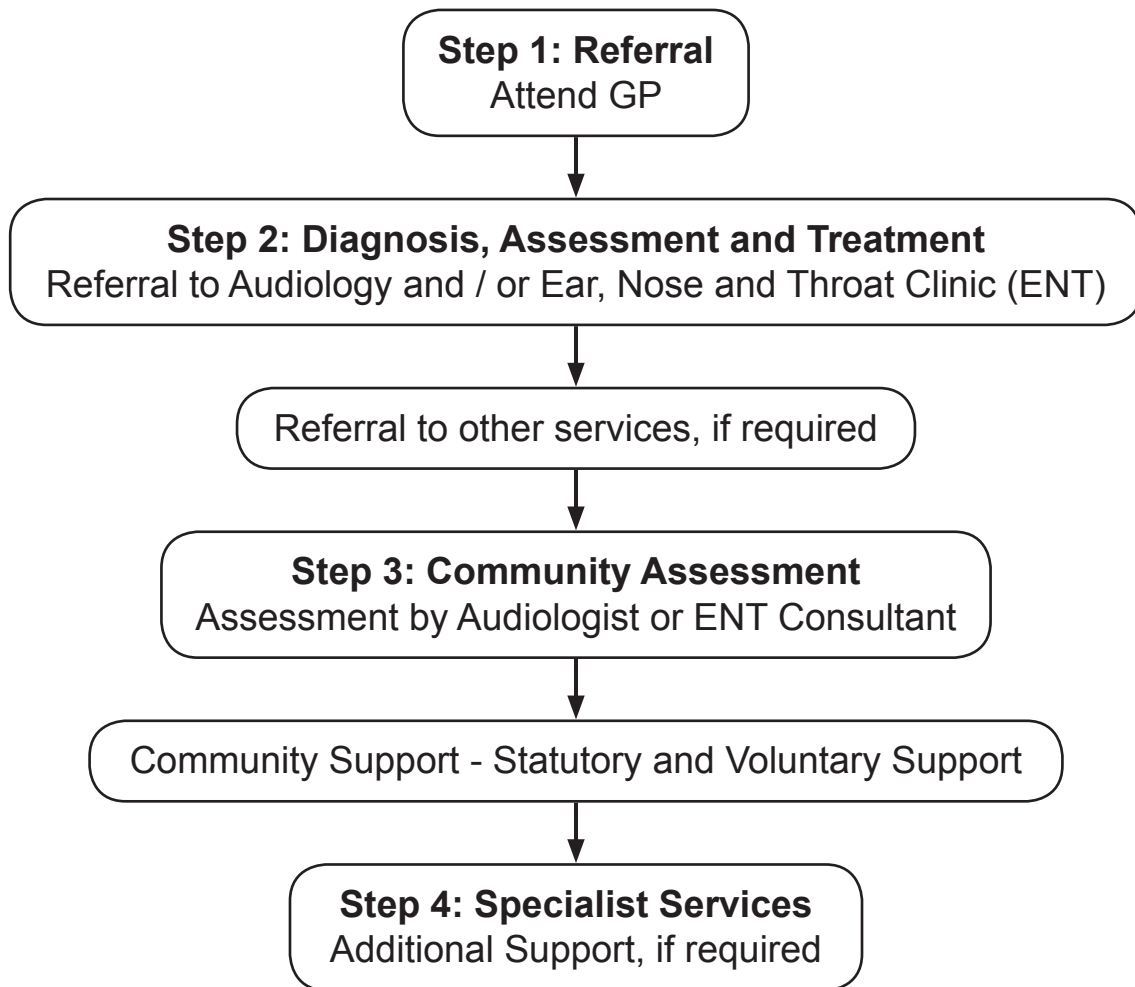
This is a condition where a person experiences internal sound in their ears and or head, but there is no physical sound noise in the environment around them. The noise can be a range of sounds such as ringing, buzzing, humming. At present there is no cure for tinnitus. However, people can be enabled to use various coping strategies to help them minimise the impact of the noise in their life.

Deafblind

When a person experiences both hearing and sight loss also known as dual sensory loss. This can happen for a number of reasons, and can impact different individuals in different ways. A person may be Deafblind from birth, or lose their hearing and sight to varying degrees and at different stages over their lifetime.

FLOW CHART

The flow chart below outlines the journey along the care pathway.



THE CARE PATHWAY FLOW CHART

The care pathway includes a number of key stages:

- Referral
- Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment
- Community Assessment / Support
- Specialist Services

This section outlines what is involved in each stage.

Step 1: Referral

I am experiencing difficulties with my hearing. I attend my GP to discuss the issue and my experience.

Your GP will carry out a preliminary examination of your ears and may refer you to Audiology and / or Ear Nose and Throat Clinic (ENT) for further examination.

Step 2: Diagnosis, Assessment and Treatment

My GP refers me to Audiology and / or Ear Nose and Throat Clinic (ENT). Following a hearing test, I may receive hearing aids and other treatment. However, if I am still experiencing communication and daily living challenges related to my hearing, I may be referred on to other services.

Step 3: Community Assessment

My audiologist or ENT Consultant may refer me to the Auditory (Cochlear) Implant Centre or Statutory (the Sensory Support Team provided by my local Health and Social Care Trust) and/or Voluntary Organisations for social, emotional and practical support. This might include: emotional support, provision of equipment that could help me at home or work, hearing aid aftercare, information and advice.

Community Support

Types of support offered may include:

Statutory Sector (Health and Social Care Northern Ireland)	Voluntary Sector (charities and community-based organisations)
Access to communication support*	Advice and Information
Cochlear or other implantable devices	Advocacy
Communication Support	Befriending
Counselling	Communication support
Emotional support	Employment advice
Equipment provision	Hearing aid maintenance
Group work	Mentoring
Hearing aid provision, maintenance and support	Tinnitus support
Lip reading	
Rehabilitation	
Tinnitus support	

Step 4: Specialist Services

I may experience tinnitus or have dual sensory loss. I may experience mental health difficulties because I am finding it hard to cope.

If any of these things should happen, I know I can discuss them with a member of staff in the Sensory Support Team. I may be referred to a specialist service which, following a comprehensive assessment, can give me specialist advice and support.

*Communication support may include access to the Regional Communication Support Service which provides a range of interpretation services for people using health and social care in Northern Ireland.

Guiding Principles

Individuals and their families and carers can expect:

- Person-centred care and support, which focuses on improving access, timely assessment and individually tailored interventions.
- To be able to access individually tailored information, communication and support.
- Access to specialist multidisciplinary and multi-agency working to ensure the development of a co-ordinated and integrated care pathway.
- Equitable access to voluntary and independent sector services available in their communities.
- Referral access points that offer equitable service provision.
- Access to information about available services in statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.
- Client and family involvement central to assessment goal planning and decision working.
- A Self-Directed Support (SDS) care and support plan agreed with the individual, their families and service provider and provided to the individual in their choice of accessible format.

Useful Contacts

Statutory Sector	Community and Voluntary Sector
Belfast Trust Tel: 028 9504 0200 Textphone: 028 9091 2197 Mobile (SMS only): 0773 888 3116	Action Deaf Youth Email: info@actiondeafyouth.org Tel: 02890992779
Northern Trust Tel: 028 2586 3800 Email: sensorysupport@northerntrust.hscni.net Mobile (SMS only) 07881 328952	Action on Hearing Loss NI - NICVA Tel: 028 9087 7777 Email: information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk
Southern Trust Craigavon/Banbridge/South Down/Newry East Tel: 028 3839 4088 Minicom: 028 3839 4738 Mobile: 07834 929 124 Email: sensory.cherrytrees@southerntrust.hscni.net	British Deaf Association Email: bda@bda.org.uk
Armagh/Dungannon/South Armagh/Newry West Tel: 028 3756 4444 Minicom: 028 3741 2421 Mobile: 07919 103 501 E-mail: sensory.jacksonhall@southerntrust.hscni.net	Deafblind NI Email: info@deafblind.co.uk Tel: 0800 132 320
	National Deaf Children's Society Email: nioffice@ndcs.org.uk Tel: 028 9035 2011
	RNID Email: contact@rnid.org.uk Tel: 0808 808 0123 Text: 07587 130 502
	Sense NI Carrickfergus, County Antrim Email: nienquires@sense.org.uk Tel: 028 9335 5665 Newtownabbey, County Antrim Email: nienquires@sense.org.uk Tel: 028 9083 3430

Statutory Sector continued

South Eastern Trust

North Down & Ards

Tel: 028 9151 0136

Minicom: 028 9151 0137

Mobile: 07734 282 646

Downpatrick

Tel: 028 4461 6915

Minicom: 028 4461 4744

Mobile: 07739 879 556

Lisburn

Tel: 028 9260 7746

Minicom: 028 9260 3120

Mobile: 07739 879 554

Western Trust

Derry/Londonderry

Tel: 028 7132 0167

Minicom: 028 7132 0166

Mob: 077 9644 8367

Fermanagh/Tyrone

Tel/Minicom: 028 6632 4400

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