

**EAST KENT HOSPITALS NHS TRUST
AUDIOLOGY DEPARTMENT
DIGITAL HEARING AID SERVICE**

POSITION STATEMENT – JANUARY 2007

1. Service Provision:-

The East Kent Audiology Department provides a Digital Hearing Aid service at:-

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital;
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford;
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate and;
- Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone.

Since April 2006 – additional initiatives have been introduced to create additional capacity through restructuring of timetables and resources at:

- Whitstable and Tankerton Hospital;
- Queen Victoria Hospital – Herne Bay;
- Faversham Hospital;
- Victoria Hospital – Deal;
- Bethesda Medical Centre in Cliftonville.
- Garlinge Surgery – Westbrook
- Broadstairs Health Centre

It is anticipated that the service will be expanded to cover other satellite sites throughout East Kent.

2. The priority categories are:-

- Patients who have a War Pension for hearing loss;
- Registered blind patients and partially sighted patients;
- Patients in full time education;
- Patients in paid/voluntary employment where the ability to work is affected by the hearing loss;
- Principal carer of child/children;
- Principal carer of disabled family member.

Any patient who falls into the above will be prioritised as 'urgent' and will be seen within 5-6 weeks. All other patients will be prioritised as 'routine' and a hearing aid provided at the earliest opportunity; current waiting time is 83 weeks (January 2007).

3. Patient Journey:-

The following details the journey for a new patient, existing patient and patients requiring aid repairs – also detailed are the waits for each.

New Patient:-

- ❖ Referral made by GP to ENT (may be redirected to Audiology if appropriate) or Audiology.

(GP's will refer a patient to ENT rather than direct to Audiology if the clinical decision made by the GP, based on the symptoms presented by the patient, do not determine that the patient necessarily requires a hearing aid. Otherwise patients are referred direct to Audiology).

- ❖ Referral received by ENT and patient given appointment – to be **seen within 11 weeks of referral**;

or

- ❖ Referral received by Audiology and patient given appointment to be seen **within either 5-6 weeks or 18 months depending on category where they will be:**
 - screened to see if an aid is needed or not and pre-fitted for aid. Appointment takes 30 minutes.
- ❖ **2-3 weeks later** – patient invited for fitment of hearing aid. Appointment takes 45 minutes ;
- ❖ **As appropriate** – further care (battery supply, repair, reassessment etc) is given (life long).

Existing Patient (patient needing reassessment, i.e., they feel their hearing has deteriorated):-

- ❖ Patient is sent a questionnaire to prioritise their treatment;
- ❖ **5-6 weeks or 18 months depending on category ie priority/routine** – patient invited for fitment of replacement hearing aid. Appointment takes 45 minutes;
- ❖ **As appropriate** – further care (battery supply, repairs, further reassessment etc) is given (life long).

Patient requiring repair to aid:-

- ❖ Patient contacts Audiology Department and drops aid in for repair – aids turned around within 2-3 working days however if there is a need for a technician to see the patient (e.g. to take an ear impression) there is a 2-3 week wait.