



The Hearing Loss
and Deafness Alliance

Meeting local hearing health needs: a guide for Integrated Care Systems

NHS England identified hearing loss as a significant public health concern that **costs the UK economy £25 billion a year** in productivity and unemployment. This resulted in the development of NHS England's [Action Plan on Hearing Loss](#) developed jointly with the Department of Health and Social Care. This short guide will help ICSs meet local needs in a sustainable way.

The Impact of Hearing Loss

Prevalence:

- 10.1 million people in England have a hearing loss or are deaf and this is set to rise to **14.2 million by 2035**.¹
- Hearing loss ranks **third for disease burden** (years lived with disability) in England.²
- Delays to identification of hearing loss in children, and subsequently delays in appropriate management and support, have significant detrimental effects on children's lives in terms of speech and language development, literacy, mental health, educational performance, employment and social economic performance.³
- 10,930 babies are screened each week through the newborn hearing screening programme, of whom 237 are referred to audiology services each week.⁴

Unmanaged hearing loss:

- Hearing loss has been identified as the largest potentially modifiable risk factor for dementia, **associated with 8.2% of dementia cases**.⁵
- Evidence shows unmanaged hearing loss leads to a **threefold risk in falls**.⁶
- Research from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) shows many **drop out of the workforce early** due to hearing loss.⁷
- Deaf people and people with hearing loss are at greater risk of social isolation and are **twice as likely to experience mental health problems** than their hearing counterparts.⁸
- Despite the risks of unmanaged hearing loss, **people take an average of 10 years before they seek help**.⁹

The solution:

- Untreated hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline.¹⁰
- Evidence shows hearing aids are effective at improving hearing-specific health-related quality of life, **general health-related quality of life** and listening ability in adults with mild to moderate hearing loss.¹¹
- In cases where it is clinically indicated NICE recommends hearing aids as the most **cost-effective intervention** for hearing loss.¹²
- The provision of hearing aids can be complimented through additional services such as hearing therapy and access to BSL. Habilitation services should be joined up across the system with diagnostic services to meet the needs of the local population.

1. Action on Hearing Loss, 2015. Hearing Matters. What Works Guide to Healthy Ageing 2017.

2. Global Burden of Disease Study Collaborators. Global, regional, and national incidence, prevalence, and years lived with disability for 328 diseases and injuries in 195 countries, 1990-2016: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016. *Lancet*. 2017; 390:1211-59

3. World Report on Hearing. WHO 2021.

4. NHS: Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.

5. Livingston et al. (2020). Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission, *Lancet*, 396, 413-446. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30367-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30367-6)

6. Lin FR, Ferrucci L. Hearing loss and falls among older adults in the United States. *Arch Intern Med*. 2012 Feb 27;172(4):369-71. doi: 10.1001/archinternmed.2011.728. PMID: 22371929; PMCID: PMC3518403.

7. Laura Ashworth. Hidden Disadvantage. Why people with hearing loss are still losing out at work. RNID

8. McManus, S., Meltzer, H., Brugha, T. S., Bebbington, P. E., & Jenkins, R. (2009). [Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, 2007: results of a household survey](#)

9. Davis (2007) Acceptability, benefit and costs of early screening for hearing disability: a study of potential screening tests and models.

10. Bucholc M et al. (2022) The impact of hearing impairment and hearing aid use on progression to mild cognitive impairment in cognitively healthy adults: An observational cohort study.

11. Ferguson MA et al. (2017) Hearing aids for mild to moderate hearing loss in adults. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*.

12. NICE (2018) Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management.

3 steps to meeting local needs

Step one - Understanding local needs

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) guidance for assessing hearing needs](#)

This JSNA guide and [data tool](#) helps local health and care leaders plan integrated care, tackle unmet need, improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities for people with hearing loss.

Step two - Planning evidence based, cost-effective services

[Commissioning Guide on Hearing Loss](#)

This NHS Commissioning Framework supports commissioners to secure good value services for their local populations.

[NICE Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management](#)

This guideline aims to improve the quality of life for adults with hearing loss by advising health and care staff on assessing hearing loss, managing earwax and referring people for audiological or specialist assessment and management.

[NHSE Guidance on Paediatric Hearing Services](#)

Guidance from NHS England to ICBs based on the Paediatric hearing Services Improvement Programme.

Step three - Monitoring services

NICE [Hearing loss in adults Quality Standard](#)

This NICE quality standard covers assessing and managing hearing loss in adults (aged 18 and over). It describes high-quality care and priority areas for improvement.

Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS)

The IQIPS scheme is a UKAS supported quality assurance framework including guidance for delivering quality audiology services.

[NHS England's Accessible Information Standard](#)

This Information Standard puts a legal duty on all NHS and adult social care providers to make their services accessible for people with disabilities and sensory loss, including people with hearing loss.

Other useful links

[NICE pathways](#)

[NICE guidance on cochlear implants](#)

[NICE guidance on tinnitus](#)

[What Works Employment](#)

[What Works guide to healthy ageing](#)

[What Works transition to adulthood](#)

[Royal College of GPs hearing loss resources for GPs](#)

[Royal College of Psychiatrists guidance on Commissioning Deaf mental health services](#)

[Newborn Hearing Screening](#)

[Commissioning Guidance for Sensory Support Services for Children and Young People](#)

[Eligibility framework for LA Sensory Impairment services](#)

To learn more about the Alliance and for a full list of members, visit <https://www.hlda.org.uk/about-us/>



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