



Hearing therapy

Information for patients from the Audiology Department

This leaflet will explain how hearing therapy can help you with conditions associated with hearing and hearing loss.

Hearing therapy can help manage the psychological effects of hearing loss. The two main conditions are tinnitus and hyperacusis.

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please speak to your audiologist.

What is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the name for hearing noises that do not come from an outside source. It's not usually a sign of anything serious and may get better by itself.

Tinnitus can sound like:

- ringing
- buzzing
- whooshing
- humming
- hissing
- throbbing
- music or singing.

You may hear these sounds in one or both ears, or in your head. They may come and go, or you might hear them all the time.

- Tinnitus is very common and reported in all age groups, including young children.
- Around 1 in 3 people will have tinnitus at some point in their lives. Over 1 in 8 people live with invasive tinnitus. Invasive tinnitus is when a person has tinnitus all the time.

- People with normal hearing can have tinnitus. However, it is more common in people who have hearing loss or other ear related problems.

Most people find that they are able to continue their normal day-to-day activities. However, for a small number of people tinnitus severely affects them.

For some people, tinnitus sounds can be accompanied by sensitivity to certain sounds. This is called hyperacusis.

What is hyperacusis?

Hyperacusis is when everyday sounds seem much louder to you than they should. These sounds can cause physical pain.

What are the different types of hyperacusis?

- **Loudness hyperacusis** - moderately intense sounds are uncomfortably loud.
- **Noxacusis** is hyperacusis with pain. This is usually physical pain in response to everyday sounds that do not bother most people.
- **Misophonia** - everyday sounds make you angry.
- **Phonophobia** - everyday sounds make you anxious.
- **Vestibular hyperacusis** - everyday sounds cause balance issues and / or vertigo.
- **Reactive tinnitus** - everyday sounds increase tinnitus activity.
- **Distortion from sound** - everyday sounds become distorted.
- **Diplacusis** generally happens when one ear is more damaged than the other.
 - Diplacusis Dysharmonica occurs when a tone is heard normally in one ear but at a different pitch in the other ear. This is the most common form of diplacusis.
 - Diplacusis Echoica occurs when the timing of tones is slightly different in each ear. The same sound repeats as an echo.
 - Diplacusis Binauralis occurs when the same sound is heard differently in each ear. This may be a change in pitch or timing.
 - Diplacusis Monauralis occurs when one ear hears the same tone as two different sounds.
- **Acoustic shock** - your hearing changes in response to a sudden, unexpected noise. Symptoms can include tinnitus, hyperacusis, and tonic tensor tympani syndrome (TTTS).

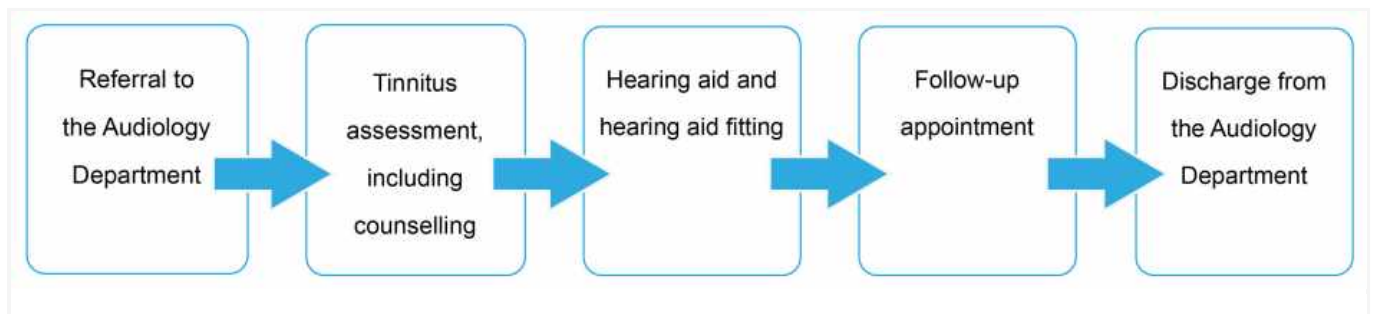
What happens when I am referred for hearing therapy?

On the tinnitus and hyperacusis pathways, we use the following techniques to help you manage your conditions.

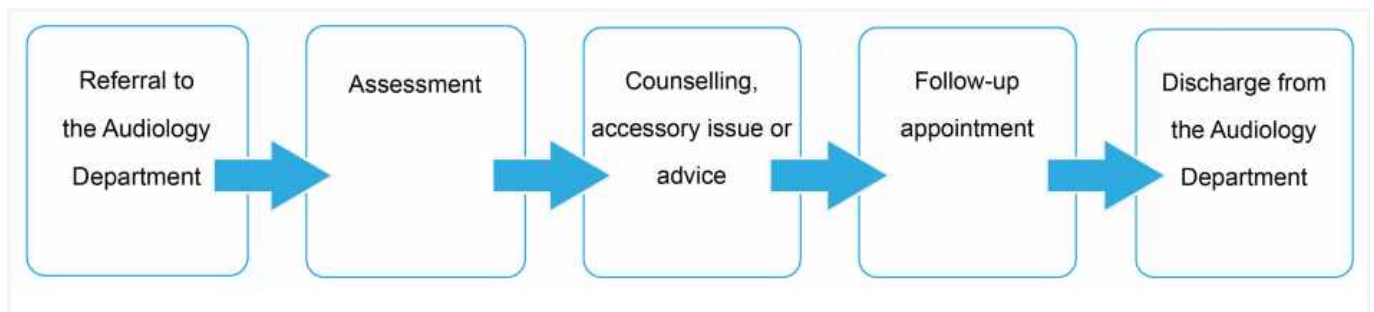
- Talking therapies
- Relaxation exercises
- Mindfulness
- Accessories issue / advice
- **For tinnitus patients only.** Hearing aids set as combination hearing aids with tinnitus masking sounds or as hearing aids.
- Environmental aid demonstrations and advice.

*Please note that each patient is different. Which techniques we use will depend on your condition and how it affects your life.

Tinnitus pathway



Hyperacusis pathway



What am I likely to achieve or get out of my hearing therapy sessions?

- A clearer knowledge of tinnitus and your sound tolerance.
- More confidence and less troubled by your condition. Hopefully, you will think about your condition less often.
- Feel supported by us.
- Be able to hear and communicate better in everyday life.
- Learn how to manage your levels of tinnitus and sound intolerance related stress.
- Manage better in places where you struggled in the past.

- Understand when and how to protect your ears.
- Be more empowered and able to cope by yourself.

What if I have any questions?

If you have any queries about hearing therapy or your condition, please contact the Audiology Department.

- **Audiology Department**
Telephone: 01227 864252
Lines are open 10am to 12 noon, and 2pm to 4pm
Email (ekh-tr.audiology@nhs.net)

Useful websites

- Tinnitus UK (<https://tinnitus.org.uk/>)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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