

Adult audiology department

Communication awareness

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet is aimed at patients and communication partners attending an appointment at the audiology department.

When someone speaks, clues are gained not only from what is heard but also from what is seen. You may be able to help create a situation so that as many clues as possible are available.

If you have a hearing difficulty:

- do not be afraid to tell people that you have difficulty in hearing
- make sure the room is well-lit
- try to sit with your back to the light source, such as a window, so that the light falls on the speaker's face
- position yourself three to six feet from the speaker as lip-reading is difficult if the speaker is too near or too far away
- try to watch the speaker's lips - you may be surprised at the number of clues you pick up without realising it
- do not let yourself get too tired or tense as you will be able to lip-read better if you are relaxed
- make sure your eyesight has recently been checked as you don't want to strain your eyes
- do not be afraid to let people know that you have to rely on lip-reading and give them an idea of how they can help you:
 - by facing you and keeping their heads fairly still
 - by keeping their mouth visible and not hiding the lip movements
 - by not shouting but speaking clearly and not too fast
 - by not speaking too slowly (this may destroy the natural rhythm of speech)
 - by attracting your attention before speaking so you can catch the beginning of what is said
 - by not distracting your attention with unnecessary hand movements

If you are talking to somebody who has a hearing difficulty:

- attract the listener's attention before you start talking to them so that they can catch the beginning of what is said and not just the ending
- avoid speaking from another room or with your head in a cupboard
- keep your face visible and ensure it is well-lit
- try to avoid conversation in the kitchen where there are background noises from food mixers, washing machines and dishwashers
- do not hide your lip movements behind your hands, a newspaper or a book
- keep your head fairly still when speaking
- use natural hand gestures but do not exaggerate
- do not shout, as shouting and over-mouthing will alter the lip pattern. Instead, speak clearly and not too fast; speaking too slowly may destroy the natural rhythm of speech
- try to make the subject of conversation as clear as possible
- try to use full sentences, rather than just short phrases, as they are easier to understand
- when you are speaking do not distract the listener's attention with unnecessary hand movements
- remove sunglasses while speaking as it is helpful for a hearing-impaired person to see the speaker's eyes to gauge how they are feeling
- repeat the sentence again if necessary or rephrase what you want to say. Some words are more difficult to lip-read than others. For example, the month of March is easier to lip-read than August. In the word March the shapes making the **m** and **ch** are visible on the lips, but the components in August are made inside the mouth so there is nothing to see
- remember that a hearing aid amplifies background noise as well as speech

The best conditions for listening are:

- a room with soft furnishings such as carpets, curtains and cushions. These absorb sound, reducing the echo effect
- rooms or spaces with less background noise

Audiology department contact details

Charing Cross Hospital	St Mary's Hospital	St Mary Abbots Hearing Aid Centre
Adult audiology department Charing Cross Hospital 1 st floor, south wing Fulham Palace Road Hammersmith W6 8RF Tel: 020 3311 1021 Email: audiology.imperial@nhs.net	Adult audiology department St Mary's Hospital Audiology department Basement, Mary Stanford Wing Praed Street W2 1NY Tel: 020 3312 1015 Email: ichc-tr.imperialaudiologistmarys@nhs.net	St Mary Abbots Hearing Aid Centre 2 Beatrice Place Marloes Road W8 5LW Tel: 020 3315 6011 Email: audiology.imperial@nhs.net

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross Hospital) or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's Hospital). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

Adult audiology
Published: August 2023
Review date: August 2026
Reference no: 2980
© Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust