



*World Hearing Day  
3 March 2021*



**HEARING CARE FOR ALL**  
SCREEN • REHABILITATE • COMMUNICATE



# World Hearing Day 2021

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**NHS audiology and communication  
during COVID 19 – can we do better?**

LIDIA BEST, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF DEAFENED PEOPLE

UK PARLIAMENT 3 MARCH 2021

# NHS Audiology Services Survey 2018

Majority appreciate  
free and universal  
access to hearing  
aids



Need for a patient-centred approach focused on counselling, lifestyle , adaptation and follow up



Respondents wished to have received guidance regarding Assistive Listening Technology



CHOICE of the device and settings is an important factor in user satisfaction. *One size does not fit all.*



Hearing aids users need to be better involved in the decision-making process on their hearing care

# NHS Audiology Services Survey 2018

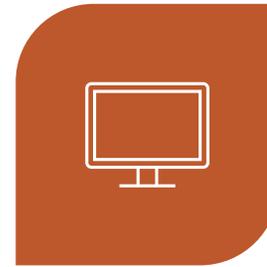
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APPOINTMENTS  
ROUTINELY VIA PHONE



SMS RARELY OFFERED  
FOR APPOINTMENTS



ONLY 10 % CLINICS HAD  
A CALLING DISPLAY  
BOARD



ONLY 14 % USERS WERE  
OFFERED ONLINE  
APPOINTMENTS

# Impact of COVID-19 on people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing

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General Practitioners services moved to telephone consultations only

Training, education and employment moved to online platforms

Local authority's rapid response teams- mostly phonelines

Hearing Care services – stopped initially

**People over the age of 70, deemed as having a greater risk for severe illness after contracting COVID-19 have been and are asked to shield : many live alone**

**1 in 5 of the population has a hearing loss - that proportion increases with age  
70 % of over the age of 70**

*Lack of consistent application of the NHS information standard and many different remote access and care systems are being used.....*

# Access to Health services



Relay UK service is not optimised for receiving calls



Email communication is not routinely offered, and patient specific needs are not always taken in consideration



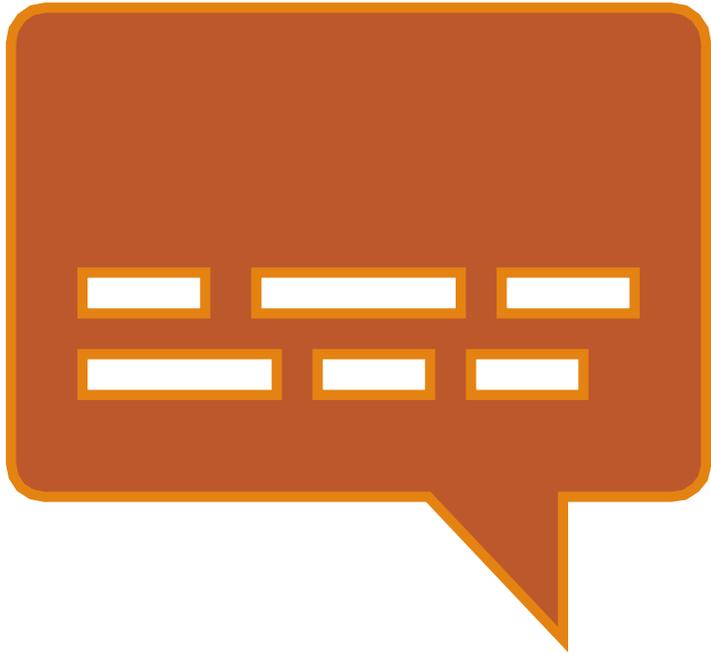
Video appointments not often offered and captioning is not enabled



Two way conversation SMS rarely offered

*Technology already exists to deploy accessible telehealth by using video calls, secure messaging, emails or even SMS*

**Ensure accessible ways of arranging health appointments and initial contacts**



# Everything is remote....

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- ❑ Lack of awareness of accessibility features of online platforms has left many people struggling to engage
- ❑ Use of video conferencing platforms can be beneficial when captioning is part of the service

*“I had video telephone consultation with Audiologist where I had to lip read. What I needed was a speech to text reporter to ensure I was not missing what was being said....” - NADP rapid review of health services July 2020*



Source: [www.weitbrecht.com](http://www.weitbrecht.com)

COVID -19 has exposed communication gaps in infrastructure of local government, health services, telecom relay services.

*It is an assumption that all persons who are deafened or hard of hearing rely on amplified phones and hearing aids/cochlear implants alone.*

**Captioned telephone services can offer a more efficient, faster and more equivalent communication between medical professionals and patients than existing Relay U.K.**

*Be mindful of everyone's needs*



*1 in 5 people have hearing loss that may cause difficulties in communication*

-  *Speak slowly and clearly*
-  *Rephrase or repeat, if necessary*
-  *Use an app that can translate speech into text or writing tools to communicate*
-  *Wear a clear mask so your lips are visible, if possible*

**HEARING CARE FOR ALL**

**Clear surgical masks ensure that all patients, particularly those with a disability, can communicate effectively with their healthcare professionals**

*“I went to give blood and the nurse refused to remove her mask to speak to me. I had to guess what they were asking and was then ignored while I donated and recovered as I couldn’t understand them. I felt very isolated and unimportant.” - NADP rapid review of health services July 2020*

**Investing in the availability clear masks for all is clearly a long term goal.**