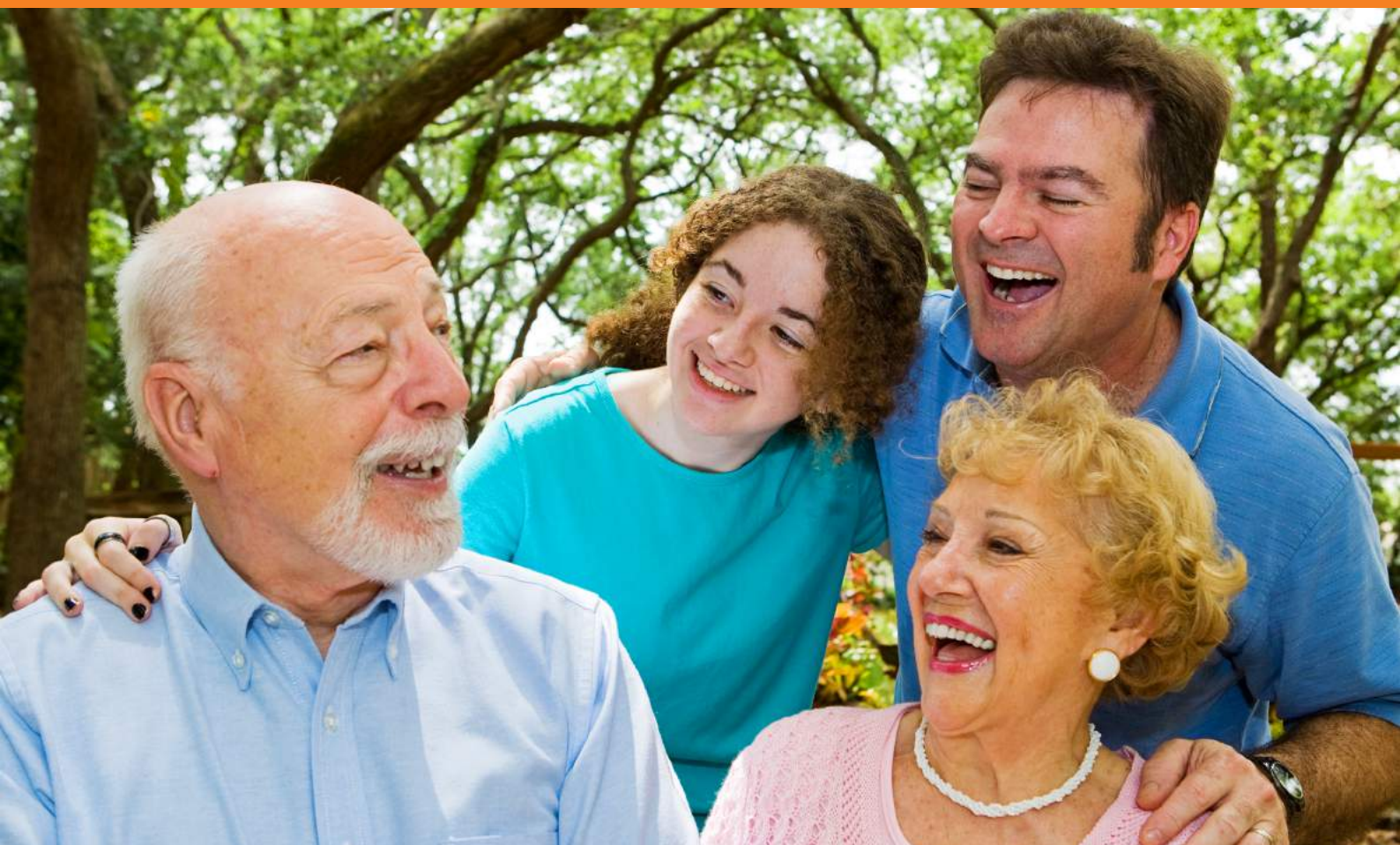


GUIDANCE:

Health and Wellbeing Boards



NHS AUDIOLOGY - ADULT HEARING SERVICES

August 2015

PURPOSE

This guidance

- 1) explains why adult hearing loss has moved up the public health agenda
- 2) sets out the challenges of improving hearing outcomes and reducing health inequalities
- 3) explains how Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) can support NHS commissioners and providers
- 4) proposes actions HWBs might take
- 5) provides a basic dataset to support local teams.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

This guidance can be read in conjunction with Monitor's [*NHS adult hearing services in England: exploring how choice is working for patients*](#), NHS England and the Department of Health's '[*Action Plan on Hearing Loss*](#)' and the British Academy of Audiology '*Services: A Guide for Health Commissioners and Health Boards*'.

You can access all the guidance in this series at <http://www.the-ncha.com/guidance-2015-18/>

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TACKLING HEARING LOSS IS AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH GOAL

Traditionally public health has focussed on environmental health issues and the major acute killer diseases such as cancer, coronary heart disease and diabetes. More recently, as these diseases have become chronic conditions for many, there has been a growing focus on prevention and on maintaining mental as well as physical health.

Now, as the population is ageing and people are generally living longer, the public health challenge has widened again to embrace ageing well, adding life to years and maintaining independent living and social inclusion outside the hospital and care systems.

Thus, prevention, early intervention, care closer to home and supporting individuals and communities in maintaining their own health and wellbeing outside hospital lies at the heart of NHS England's *Five year Forward View* and 'vanguard' programme.

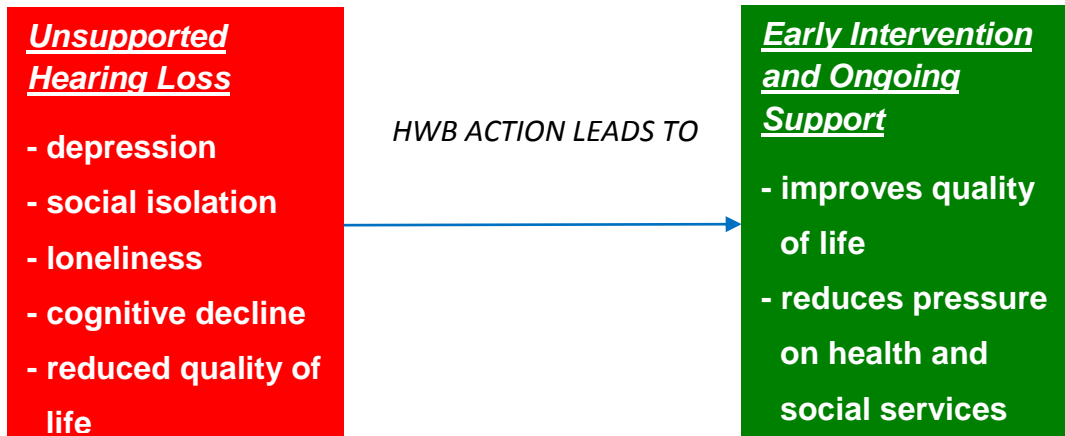
It is for this reason that preventing and tackling sensory impairment has now moved from being a second-tier to a first-tier public health issue (e.g. [NHS England and the World Health Organisation acknowledge the importance of early intervention for hearing loss – including reducing the rate of cognitive decline in older age](#)).

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS – TACKLING HEARING LOSS

Communication is an essential element of good quality of life at all ages. However it becomes fundamental to maintaining independence and inclusion during the ageing process¹. **Unsupported adult hearing loss** significantly increases the risk of **depression², social isolation³, loneliness⁴, cognitive decline⁵, early retirement⁶ and reduced quality of life⁷**. NHS England and the Department of Health have also highlighted the association between hearing loss and increased risk of **dementia⁸**.

The bad news is that, unlike using spectacles for age-related vision loss, wearing hearing aids is still perceived to be shaming and associated with weakness, loss of autonomy and frailty⁹. As a result people on average delay seeking help for 10 years, which jeopardises long-term outcomes and can add considerably to long-term costs for the health and social care system¹⁰. This makes adult onset hearing loss a major public health challenge and the 6th leading cause of years lived with disability in England¹¹.

The good news is that if addressed early, the outcomes are good and hearing intervention and ongoing support can improve quality of life by reducing the psychological and social effects associated with age-related hearing loss¹². Early intervention can also reduce pressure on health and social services¹³.

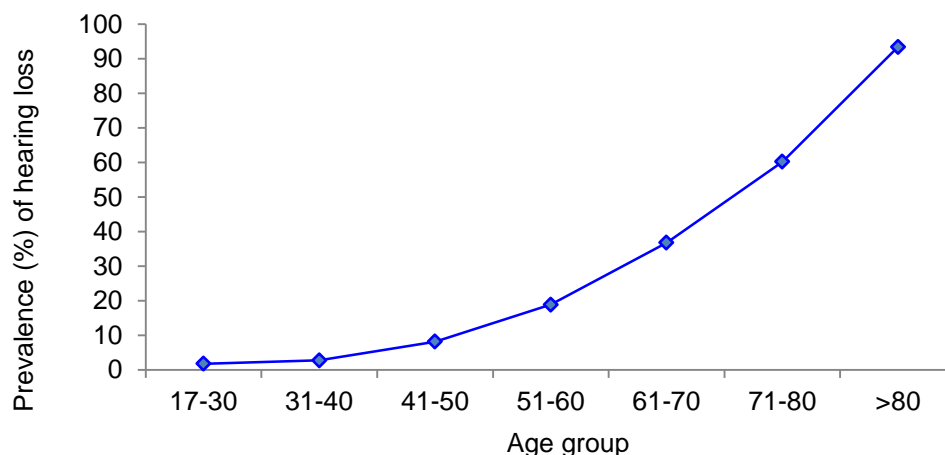


Although hearing technology does not restore normal hearing, the earlier in the hearing loss journey that hearing aids are used, the easier it is to adapt to them and continue to communicate with others and participate in daily activities.

The challenge therefore for public health is to assess need and support the NHS and communities in developing accessible non-stigmatising services so that people seek help, support and intervention when problems first occur. This will lead to better outcomes for individuals and populations and better use of resources across the care system.

HEARING NEED

There are already 3.8 million people in England with unmet hearing needs¹⁴. Age-related hearing loss is by far the main cause of hearing loss¹⁵. In 2010 there were just over 10 million people aged 65 and over, yet by 2018 there will be approximately 13 million and by 2035 this figure could reach 17 million¹⁶. As the population ages the demand for hearing care will continue to increase (Graph 1).



Graph 1: Prevalence of hearing impairment in England in each age group¹⁷

HEARING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Currently there are few local hearing needs assessments. However to address this the joint Department of Health and NHS England *Action Plan on Hearing Loss* (March 2015) advised that HWBs

“should ensure that hearing is included as part of the process to develop local health needs assessments, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs) either as part of sensory impairment or separately”¹⁸.

Without a proper hearing needs assessment, CCGs are commissioning blind and unable to plan to meet needs in the most cost-effective way within available resources. (Some are even having to implement unsound rationing strategies.) [The Action Plan on Hearing Loss](#) highlights how this risks increasing health inequalities¹⁹. The Action Plan commits Public Health England to support HWBs with additional advice and guidance on hearing needs assessments, all HWBs should take advantage of this opportunity (see [here](#)).

HWBs therefore have a vital role to ensuring the *Five Year Forward View*'s aims of prevention and improving public health is delivered locally and that local hearing needs are met.

Adult hearing loss is closely correlated with age. So even if HWB resources do not permit a fully-fledged hearing needs assessment, an acceptable assessment for planning purpose can be achieved by using the NCHA's estimated prevalence data at a CCG level (see page 6). These data are useful because hearing loss populations vary due to local demographics, for example, estimated prevalence suggests that

- the population of people with hearing loss ranges from 8 to 23% - e.g. an older population in North Norfolk (23%) having greater hearing needs than Bradford City (8%)

The average NHS hearing aid user is aged 70 and over and therefore the demand for hearing services is expected to rise rapidly as the population ages, so capacity planning now is essential if needs are to be met. This should be on the basis of

- assessed current and future need (HWBs)
- likely available capacity in the acute and community sectors (commissioners and providers)
- likely available funding (commissioners and providers).

LIBRARY OF LOCAL HEARING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

In the absence of any library of local hearing needs assessments to support knowledge sharing and in advance of the National Commissioning Framework, the NCHA is happy to provide this. HWBs are requested to send their local hearing

needs assessments to enquiries@the-ncha.com and they will be posted on an open web-based repository as soon as possible as part of a national resource to support HWBs and NHS and social care commissioners and providers.

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS

HWBs also have an important role to play in raising awareness about noise-induced hearing loss. The World Health Organisation has warned that without action people are at increased risk of noise-induced hearing loss due to exposure to recreational sound. Like age-related hearing loss, noise-induced hearing loss is irreversible. See *World Health Organisation, Make Listening Safe* – available [here](#).

ACTION

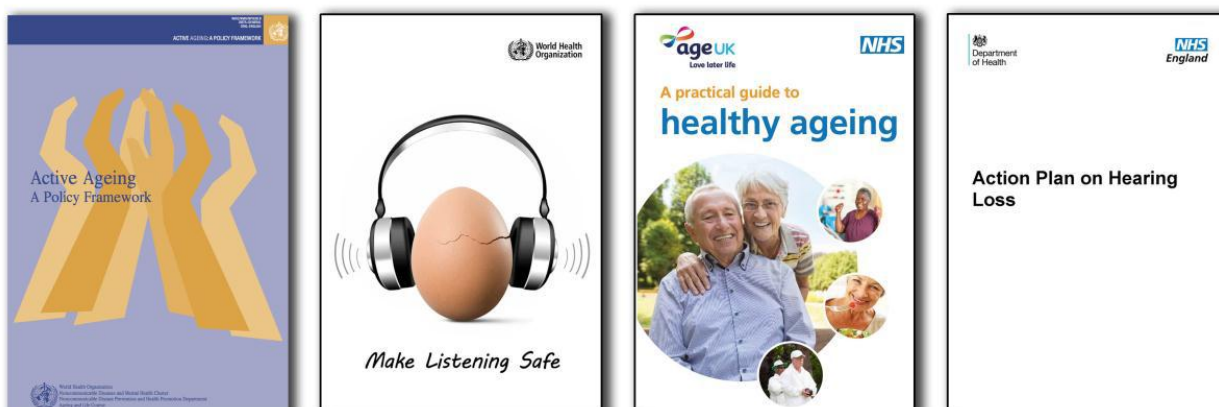
We would urge all HWBs to include a **hearing needs assessment** within their local needs assessments and JSNAs to support CCGs in meeting needs and maintaining older people's independence, health and wellbeing outside hospital and the care system.

Ideally this should be **in time for the 2017-18 commissioning round** and as part of forward planning for the 2017/20 planning cycle.

If you **send your hearing needs assessment** to enquiries@the-ncha.com we will ensure these are posted together as an **open-access national resource** on the NCHA website until such time as Public Health England takes over this function.

HWBs might include **destigmatising health messages** about hearing protection (all ages) and accessing care (age-related hearing loss) as part of wider health messaging (including in care homes).

HWBs could work with commissioners and GP practices to ensure **hearing is checked regularly** as part of both health and social care packages **for people with cognitive impairment and dementia**. HWBs might find the following publications useful (click a picture to access the document):



LOCAL PREVALENCE STATISTICS

The following pages provide local teams with estimated prevalence data for hearing loss (measured in dB). These data are based on hearing loss averaged over 0.5, 1, 2 and 4kHz.

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven	158,328	29,028	18%
NHS Ashford	118,405	19,392	16%
NHS Aylesbury Vale	193,274	30,487	16%
NHS Barking & Dagenham	187,029	21,122	11%
NHS Barnet	357,538	48,791	14%
NHS Barnsley	231,865	38,563	17%
NHS Basildon and Brentwood	248,812	41,010	16%
NHS Bassetlaw	113,003	19,999	18%
NHS Bath and North East Somerset	175,538	30,349	17%
NHS Bedfordshire	413,484	64,939	16%
NHS Bexley	232,774	36,667	16%
NHS Birmingham CrossCity	714,410	97,914	14%
NHS Birmingham South and Central	198,331	25,233	13%
NHS Blackburn with Darwen	147,657	19,813	13%
NHS Blackpool	142,080	25,509	18%
NHS Bolton	277,296	42,079	15%
NHS Bracknell and Ascot	131,791	18,412	14%
NHS Bradford City	81,741	6,708	8%
NHS Bradford Districts	332,420	46,147	14%
NHS Brent	312,245	35,574	11%
NHS Brighton & Hove	272,952	37,292	14%
NHS Bristol	428,074	57,352	13%
NHS Bromley	310,554	51,209	16%
NHS Bury	185,422	29,173	16%
NHS Calderdale	204,170	32,624	16%
NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	840,855	130,518	16%
NHS Camden	220,087	25,667	12%

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Cannock Chase	132,287	21,444	16%
NHS Canterbury and Coastal	197,807	35,499	18%
NHS Castle Point, Rayleigh and Rochford	171,297	33,003	19%
NHS Central London (Westminster)	157,640	20,048	13%
NHS Central Manchester	179,709	15,640	9%
NHS Chiltern	316,094	52,789	17%
NHS Chorley and South Ribble	166,457	27,029	16%
NHS City and Hackney	254,594	22,580	9%
NHS Coastal West Sussex	473,254	101,191	21%
NHS Corby	61,607	8,504	14%
NHS Coventry and Rugby	417,411	61,721	15%
NHS Crawley	107,053	14,476	14%
NHS Croydon	364,815	47,407	13%
NHS Cumbria	505,902	97,369	19%
NHS Darlington	105,584	17,833	17%
NHS Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley	246,390	38,735	16%
NHS Doncaster	302,468	49,731	16%
NHS Dorset	745,338	151,740	20%
NHS Dudley	313,261	53,973	17%
NHS Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield	272,878	48,140	18%
NHS Ealing	339,314	39,759	12%
NHS East and North Hertfordshire	535,855	83,587	16%
NHS East Lancashire	371,291	60,284	16%
NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland	318,516	57,040	18%
NHS East Riding of Yorkshire	313,386	62,268	20%
NHS East Staffordshire	123,312	20,255	16%
NHS East Surrey	174,374	28,485	16%
NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford	180,397	39,903	22%
NHS Eastern Cheshire	194,793	37,584	19%
NHS Enfield	313,935	40,335	13%
NHS Erewash	94,230	15,546	16%
NHS Fareham and Gosport	194,600	35,003	18%
NHS Fylde & Wyre	165,101	35,864	22%
NHS Gateshead	200,349	33,791	17%
NHS Gloucestershire	598,289	106,472	18%
NHS Great Yarmouth & Waveney	212,780	42,980	20%

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Greater Huddersfield	237,536	37,316	16%
NHS Greater Preston	201,580	30,897	15%
NHS Greenwich	255,483	28,933	11%
NHS Guildford and Waverley	204,102	34,320	17%
NHS Halton	125,722	19,094	15%
NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby	152,737	29,040	19%
NHS Hammersmith and Fulham	182,445	18,737	10%
NHS Hardwick	108,262	19,294	18%
NHS Haringey	255,540	26,002	10%
NHS Harrogate and Rural District	158,683	29,300	18%
NHS Harrow	240,499	34,154	14%
NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees	283,912	45,127	16%
NHS Hastings & Rother	180,902	37,775	21%
NHS Havering	237,927	40,919	17%
NHS Herefordshire	183,619	35,958	20%
NHS Herts Valleys	565,499	87,591	15%
NHS Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale	211,929	31,260	15%
NHS High Weald Lewes Havens	165,910	31,817	19%
NHS Hillingdon	275,499	36,489	13%
NHS Horsham and Mid Sussex	221,833	38,298	17%
NHS Hounslow	254,927	29,539	12%
NHS Hull	256,123	36,542	14%
NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk	394,882	72,076	18%
NHS Isle of Wight	138,392	29,509	21%
NHS Islington	206,285	20,796	10%
NHS Kernow	535,984	106,429	20%
NHS Kingston	160,436	21,614	13%
NHS Knowsley	145,903	22,843	16%
NHS Lambeth	304,481	28,367	9%
NHS Lancashire North	156,512	27,814	18%
NHS Leeds North	198,724	34,030	17%
NHS Leeds South and East	235,540	32,584	14%
NHS Leeds West	316,419	42,513	13%
NHS Leicester City	329,627	40,103	12%
NHS Lewisham	276,938	29,917	11%
NHS Lincolnshire East	227,771	47,939	21%

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Lincolnshire West	225,253	38,663	17%
NHS Liverpool	465,656	66,289	14%
NHS Luton	203,641	24,713	12%
NHS Mansfield & Ashfield	191,956	31,720	17%
NHS Medway	264,885	37,876	14%
NHS Merton	200,543	24,861	12%
NHS Mid Essex	377,725	63,793	17%
NHS Milton Keynes	255,399	32,126	13%
NHS Nene	616,744	95,823	16%
NHS Newark & Sherwood	114,985	20,948	18%
NHS Newbury and District	104,639	16,169	15%
NHS Newcastle North and East	139,067	18,570	13%
NHS Newcastle West	140,025	20,741	15%
NHS Newham	310,460	25,869	8%
NHS North & West Reading	99,330	15,736	16%
NHS North Derbyshire	271,899	51,187	19%
NHS North Durham	240,116	40,422	17%
NHS North East Essex	311,676	59,136	19%
NHS North East Hampshire and Farnham	205,729	30,926	15%
NHS North East Lincolnshire	159,735	27,142	17%
NHS North Hampshire	214,038	32,806	15%
NHS North Kirklees	185,434	26,877	14%
NHS North Lincolnshire	167,516	28,967	17%
NHS North Manchester	163,371	17,624	11%
NHS North Norfolk	167,524	38,212	23%
NHS North Somerset	203,091	39,356	19%
NHS North Staffordshire	212,906	38,547	18%
NHS North Tyneside	201,206	34,608	17%
NHS North West Surrey	336,391	54,496	16%
NHS North, East, West Devon	863,433	163,494	19%
NHS Northumberland	316,278	60,028	19%
NHS Norwich	191,038	31,540	17%
NHS Nottingham City	303,899	37,226	12%
NHS Nottingham North & East	145,855	24,972	17%
NHS Nottingham West	109,749	19,272	18%
NHS Oldham	225,157	32,782	15%

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Oxfordshire	641,234	99,916	16%
NHS Portsmouth	205,433	27,931	14%
NHS Redbridge	281,395	35,598	13%
NHS Redditch and Bromsgrove	178,050	30,360	17%
NHS Richmond	187,527	26,711	14%
NHS Rotherham	257,716	42,996	17%
NHS Rushcliffe	111,248	19,699	18%
NHS Salford	234,487	33,232	14%
NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham	470,584	61,502	13%
NHS Scarborough and Ryedale	110,351	22,482	20%
NHS Sheffield	551,756	82,837	15%
NHS Shropshire	307,108	58,553	19%
NHS Slough	140,713	14,773	10%
NHS Solihull	206,856	37,343	18%
NHS Somerset	531,581	103,765	20%
NHS South Cheshire	175,943	30,277	17%
NHS South Devon and Torbay	272,058	58,350	21%
NHS South East Staffs and Seisdon and Peninsular	222,365	38,893	17%
NHS South Eastern Hampshire	208,475	39,424	19%
NHS South Gloucestershire	263,417	42,683	16%
NHS South Kent Coast	202,193	38,307	19%
NHS South Lincolnshire	140,465	27,022	19%
NHS South Manchester	159,822	19,280	12%
NHS South Norfolk	232,895	44,724	19%
NHS South Reading	105,518	11,109	11%
NHS South Sefton	159,764	28,249	18%
NHS South Tees	273,532	45,096	16%
NHS South Tyneside	148,164	26,080	18%
NHS South Warwickshire	258,560	46,758	18%
NHS South West Lincolnshire	121,279	22,126	18%
NHS South Worcestershire	290,459	54,172	19%
NHS Southampton	235,870	31,308	13%
NHS Southend	174,274	29,657	17%
NHS Southern Derbyshire	512,082	82,618	16%
NHS Southport and Formby	114,205	24,515	21%

CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Southwark	288,717	27,584	10%
NHS St Helens	175,405	29,895	17%
NHS Stafford and Surrounds	150,495	27,651	18%
NHS Stockport	283,253	49,049	17%
NHS Stoke on Trent	256,900	39,826	16%
NHS Sunderland	275,330	45,874	17%
NHS Surrey Downs	280,770	50,210	18%
NHS Surrey Heath	93,513	15,319	16%
NHS Sutton	191,123	28,070	15%
NHS Swale	106,841	16,838	16%
NHS Swindon	214,944	30,685	14%
NHS Tameside and Glossop	252,885	39,186	15%
NHS Telford & Wrekin	166,831	24,262	15%
NHS Thanet	134,402	26,034	19%
NHS Thurrock	158,268	21,304	13%
NHS Tower Hamlets	256,012	19,698	8%
NHS Trafford	227,091	36,031	16%
NHS Vale of York	343,046	59,019	17%
NHS Vale Royal	102,144	17,071	17%
NHS Wakefield	326,433	53,760	16%
NHS Walsall	269,524	43,018	16%
NHS Waltham Forest	259,742	28,772	11%
NHS Wandsworth	307,710	30,922	10%
NHS Warrington	202,709	31,764	16%
NHS Warwickshire North	187,498	31,103	17%
NHS West Cheshire	227,382	41,254	18%
NHS West Essex	287,089	47,805	17%
NHS West Hampshire	541,691	102,701	19%
NHS West Kent	460,428	76,655	17%
NHS West Lancashire	110,617	19,609	18%
NHS West Leicestershire	370,244	62,048	17%
NHS West London (Kensington and Chelsea, Queen's Park and Paddington)	220,193	26,694	12%
NHS West Norfolk	170,545	35,406	21%
NHS West Suffolk	219,895	38,919	18%
NHS Wigan Borough	318,122	50,163	16%

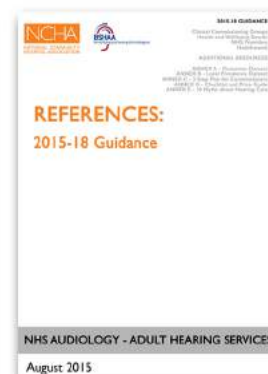
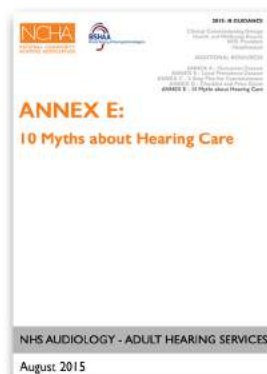
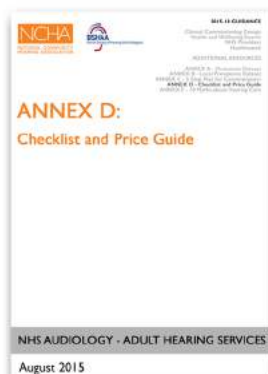
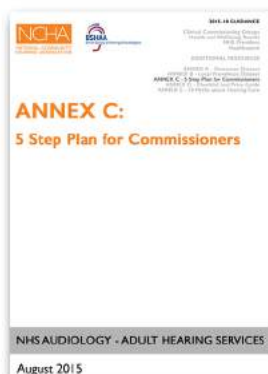
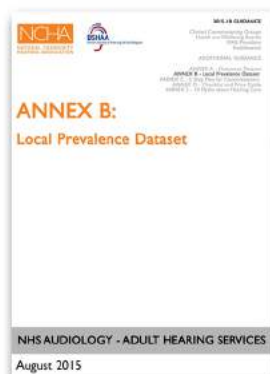
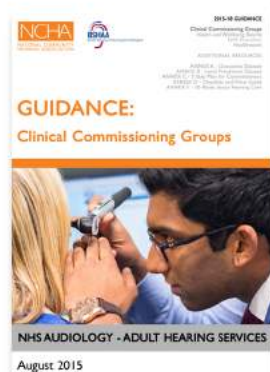
CCG Region	Population	Estimated Number of People With A Hearing Loss	Percentage of Population With a Hearing Loss ≥25dB Better Ear Average
NHS Wiltshire	474,319	82,337	17%
NHS Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead	137,584	21,785	16%
NHS Wirral	319,837	57,909	18%
NHS Wokingham	154,943	24,025	16%
NHS Wolverhampton	249,852	38,976	16%
NHS Wyre Forest	98,048	18,706	19%

Sources: Population data source Office for National Statistics Mid-2011 Population Estimates for Clinical Commissioning Groups in England by Single Year of Age based on 2011 Census²⁰.

Prevalence calculated for the following cohorts: 0-16 years (0.33%), 17-30 (1.8%), 31-40 (2.8%), 41-50 (8.2%), 51-60 (18.9%), 61-70 (36.8%), 71-80 (60.2%), >80 years old (93.4%). Notes: Estimates from 0-16 are not available in the literature, so are based on 35,000 children in England having a hearing loss²¹ and the population of people aged ≤16 being 10,673,755²² (0.33%). Prevalence data for 17 to 80 year is taken from Davis (1989)²³ and for adults aged 80 and over from Davis (1995)²⁴.

For a complete reference list click [here](#)

GUIDANCE IN THIS SERIES



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