



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

West Dorset Audiology Service
Dorset County Hospital

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www.dchft.nhs.uk
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West Dorset Audiology Service during coronavirus (COVID-19) Autumn 2020 Update

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we had to cancel all routine audiology appointments from mid-March until the end of July 2020. Therefore we have a large backlog of patients waiting for appointments.

We have now re-started some routine clinics, but we need to leave extra time between appointments to thoroughly clean the clinic rooms and equipment. In addition to this, our capacity for face-to-face appointments in audiology will be further reduced for the foreseeable future as the Surgical Admissions Lounge (who prepare vulnerable patients coming into hospital for surgery) have taken over our department at Dorset County Hospital (DCH). This is due to the Emergency Department at DCH requiring more space during the pandemic, which has had a domino effect throughout the hospital.

Hence, there will be a significant delay in the re-booking of patients whose appointments were cancelled due to coronavirus and in seeing new patients going forward.

To combat the above, we are maximising the number of clinic appointments we can offer at the community hospitals (which means that you may be offered a sooner appointment further from your home) and we are also helping our patients as much as possible by telephone, email and post to maintain access to good hearing and communication at this difficult time.

If you are having problems with your hearing aid(s), you can obtain help from us in the following ways:

If you are having problems with your hearing aid(s), you can obtain help from us in the following ways:

- i. We are answering the telephone 08.30-17.30 Mon-Fri (excluding bank holidays) and can deal with any queries you may have (although we receive a high volume of incoming calls so please bear with us at busy times).

Our telephone number is **01305 255563**

- ii. We can also be contacted via email at audiology@dchft.nhs.uk

- iii. We are running a postal hearing aid repair service. You can post your hearing aid(s) to us at:

The Audiology Department
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Alternatively if you live close by, hearing aids can be left for repair in the post box on the wall outside the Audiology Department at Dorset County Hospital (DCH).

Please include a note with your **name, date of birth, address and summary of the problem.**

All repaired hearing aids will be posted back to your home address free of charge.

(Please note that hearing aids cannot be left for repair at any of the community hospitals at the current time).

- iv. We are posting out batteries to our patients (please contact us by phone or email to request these).
- v. We are posting out earmould tubing and instructions to patients so that they can service and maintain their hearing aids themselves (as above, please contact us to request these).

There are some videos on cleaning and re-tubing your earmould on our website, which you may find helpful: <https://www.dchft.nhs.uk/patients/departments-A-F/audiology/Pages/default.aspx>

There is also lots of useful information on the following websites:

National Deaf Children's Society: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/first-diagnosis/newborn-hearing-screening/>

C2Hear: <https://c2hearonline.com/>

Action on Hearing Loss: <https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>

Our Dorset video library: <https://healthvideos.ourdorset.nhs.uk/audiology>

Please note that the Audiology Department at Dorset County Hospital is currently closed so patients are unable to walk in to pick up batteries, drop off hearing aids for repair or to speak to the Audiology Reception Team. This is because there are vulnerable patients in the department under the care of the Surgical Admissions Lounge Team awaiting surgery.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Yours sincerely

The Audiology Department
Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust