

Community Paediatric Audiology

Q1. What is Community Paediatric Audiology?

We provide hearing tests for children aged 0-18 years that have hearing difficulties including those with middle ear disorders and complex needs. Where clinically necessary we may refer children to a tertiary audiology service, an ear nose and throat surgeon or their GP.

Q2. Who provides this service in Bexley?

This service is provided by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust and Audiology appointments are held at the following locations:

- Acorns, Queen Mary's Hospital, Frognaal Place, Sidcup, DA14 6LT
- Erith Health Centre, 50 Pier Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 1RQ

Q3. How can parents/carers access this service?

If a parent/carer is concerned about a child or young person's hearing acuity, they should speak to their GP, health visitor, school nurse or any healthcare professional involved in their care. These professionals can fill out a referral form with parents/carers and email it to oxl-tr.bexleyscs-spa@nhs.net or post it to:

- Single Point of Access Bexley, Acorns, Queen Mary's Hospital, Frognaal Place, Sidcup, DA14 6LT.

The child must be registered with a Bexley GP in order to access this service

Q4. How long will a child have to wait for an appointment with Community Paediatric Audiology?

We aim to offer children an appointment within 6 weeks of receiving a referral requesting a hearing assessment.

Q5. What happens at your appointment?

A child will be seen by one or two Paediatric Audiologists and sometimes by a Community Paediatrician who specialises in Audiology, depending on the needs of the child or young person. The clinician(s) will introduce themselves and explain what will be happening at the appointment. We have different assessment methods depending on the child/ young person's age, ability and needs.

After the assessment is finished the results will be explained and onward management will be discussed with the parent/carer. Sometimes we might need to book another appointment to complete the assessment if the child does not fully cooperate during the session. Parents/carers do not need to worry if this happens as their child might be tired, bored, fed up or just not in the right mood.

A young person or older child might be tested using headphones where they will need to press a button or drop a cube in to a box when they hear a sound; this might be modified based on ability.

For babies, toddlers and younger children we might use a range of different tests where sounds are played via a speaker and based on the age and ability of the child they are either asked to perform a task like 'drop a cube in the box' when they hear a sound or a visual reward like an animated toy might be presented when a response to sound is observed.

The Audiologist or Paediatrician will also look in the child's ears and use a machine that can check for catarrhal fluid behind the ear drum and another machine that can check for responses from the outer hair cells in the cochlea. Sometimes a test using familiar words might also be used where the child either repeats the word or points to the toy or object named that is laid out in front of them.

Q6. Can parents/carers request an interpreter?

Yes, if we are made aware of your communication needs in advance of your appointment or at the time of referral, we will be able to arrange for an interpreter who speaks your language. We are also able to arrange an interpreter for BSL.

Q7. Can parents/carers bring other children to the appointment?

We would strongly advise that parents/carers arrange alternative childcare for other children or bring another adult with them who can supervise the other children in the waiting area while the test is in progress. This is because the test does require a quiet environment and minimal distraction which is not possible if there are too many people in the test room.

Q8. If the child has a cold, cough or is unwell on the day, can they still attend the appointment?

Parents/carers are asked to call to cancel the appointment if their child has a cold, cough or is unwell on the day. Colds and coughs do affect a hearing test and if they are unwell, they will not be able to perform the test optimally and will require the appointment to be rearranged in order to complete the assessment.

Q9. What are Aetiological Investigations for Hearing Loss?

Children or young people who have a permanent or sensorineural hearing loss can be offered a series of test and assessments to try and identify a possible cause for the hearing loss.

Q10. Who provides this service in Bexley and how can a child be referred?

This service is provided by Oxleas NHS Trust and the appointments are carried out at Acorns, Queen Mary's Hospital, Frogna Place, Sidcup, DA14 6LT.

Referrals for this service can only be made by the Tertiary Audiology Team at St. Thomas' Hospital who would have confirmed a permanent or sensorineural hearing loss and discussed the opportunity for having Aetiological Investigations prior to making the referral.

Q11. What happens at the appointment?

At your appointment the child will see a Community Paediatrician who specialises in Audiology. General developmental checks will be done along with taking a detailed medical history and family history of permanent or sensorineural hearing loss. Tests that are able to try and identify any known causes of the hearing loss will be discussed with parents/carers and can be requested if they are interested. These tests might include blood tests, urine tests and MRI scans.

Q12. What happens after the appointment?

After the appointment, we will send referrals and requests to other hospitals and departments to carry out the tests that parents/carers agreed with the Paediatrician at the appointment. Parents/carers will then receive appointments or will have to make appointments for these tests to be carried out.

Once the Paediatrician has received all of the test results, which can take a few months, we will write to parents/carers or call them to discuss the results and outcome of the investigations. Sometimes we might need to request a few more tests and/or see the child again for another appointment.

Contact Details:

Single Point of Access Bexley,
Acorns, Queen Mary's Hospital,
Frogna Place, Sidcup, DA14 6LT
Email: oxl-tr.bexleyscs-spa@nhs.net
Phone: 02030040092