

20220228 FOI ref 592-2122

## **Audiology Services: Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities and Autistic People**

**Please complete these questions if your audiology service provides diagnostic hearing assessments AND hearing aid provision for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people.** This provision may be delivered through a specialist service or as part of your mainstream service.

For the purpose of this request the following terms have been used:

**Intellectual Disabilities:** People who have an intellectual or learning disability identified in their medical records.

**Autistic People:** People who have autism spectrum disorder and whose autism is known to audiology services.

**Co-occurrence of intellectual disabilities and autism:** Autism spectrum disorder is not an intellectual disability, but these conditions may co-occur. For the purposes of these questions, questions which ask for information regarding autistic people refer to autistic people without an intellectual disability. Where autism co-occurs with an intellectual disability, please include these people in the information regarding intellectual disabilities.

Clinical definitions of intellectual disabilities and autism are included in the footnote.

**Scope:** This information request **does not** include services for people with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, or later acquired cognitive deficits, such as dementia.

Please base your answers on your service provision between 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

**Intellectual Disabilities:** intellectual disability is defined according to the World Health Organization as: “a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence). This results in a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), and begins before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.”

**Autism:** The term “autistic people” is used to refer to any individual with autism spectrum disorder. According to the World Health Organization, autism spectrum disorder is “characterised by some degree of difficulty with social interaction and communication. Other characteristics are atypical patterns of activities, such as difficulty with transition from one activity to another, a focus on details and unusual reactions to sensation”.

The vast majority of these questions can be answered with a “Select all that apply” or yes/no choice

### Section 1: Your service

Please answer the questions below based on the situation as of July 2021.

Your name:	Michaela Brogan
Your role:	Head of Audiology
Your email address:	Michaela.brogan@uhnm.nhs.uk
Your telephone number:	07182 679495

Please give the name of your audiology service/s. If you provide services on behalf of another Trust/s please provide details of all the Trusts that you provide services for below. **Please write names in full and expand acronyms:**

Hearing and Balance Clinic, University Hospital of North Midlands, Royal Stoke.  
Audiology Department, County Hospital, Stafford.

### Section 2: Your caseload of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people

2.1 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging people with intellectual disabilities who use the service?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

The information is stored on the audiology patient database on the patient details page. It is used to identify patients who will benefit from care by specialist clinicians.

2.2 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging autistic people who use the service?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

This only applies to children with ASD who will have the diagnosis in their clinical notes. We have no way of flagging autistic adults, unless they also fall under the category of patients with intellectual needs.

Please include the following information for your service. **We understand that you may not record all these numbers.** Please only fill in the numbers your service records or provide an estimate if possible (noting with an E). If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state 'not recorded':

<b>Total population of the area that your service covers</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
<b>The geographical boundaries your service covers</b>	Not recorded
<b>Age group your service covers (e.g., 0 – 18 years, 18+ years)</b>	0+
<b>Total number of adults with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.</b>	Not recorded
<b>Total number of children (&lt;18 years) with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.</b>	Not recorded
<b>Total number of autistic adults who were seen between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.</b>	Not recorded
<b>Total number of autistic children (&lt;18 years) who were seen between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.</b>	Not recorded

### Section 3: Transition to adult services

3.1 How do you prepare young people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic young people for transition to adult services? Please select all that apply.

Not applicable: adult only service	
Provide easy read information on the adult service for young people	
Professional liaison arranged between adult and paediatric services prior to transition	
Offer an appointment with the adult service before being discharged from the children's service	
Hold joint appointments with both paediatric and adult audiologist present	
Visit local schools to offer sessions to share information with young people about deafness, independence and transition etc.	
Discuss reasonable adjustments that can be offered in the adult service	✓
None of the above	

Other please state:

--

#### Section 4: Reasonable Adjustments

**Reasonable adjustments:** According to The Equality Act 2010, service providers should make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to their provision, to allow disabled people to access the same services as non-disabled people. These adjustments will be different for different services. What is reasonable for one provider may not be possible or relevant for another provider.

4.1 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate accessibility to audiology services? Select all that apply:

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people	For anyone who needs them
Test room of sufficient size to accommodate client, up to 2 carers and up to 2 testers			✓
Wheelchair access			✓
Directions to your service written in an accessible format and clear signage displayed <i>in situ</i>			✓
A quiet waiting area			✓
An appropriate alternative to a soundproof room for patients who find this unpleasant			
Range of testing position options within test room			✓
Home visit			✓
Appointments at Day Services or Day Centres			

Other – please specify:

4.2 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate appointment flexibility? Select all that apply:

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people	For anyone who needs them
Longer appointment times			✓
Providing breaks during appointments or offering multiple appointments			
Option of different times			✓
Extended opening times (before 9 am and/or after 5pm)			✓
Saturday appointments			
Telephone or video appointments			✓

We offer extra appointments in school holidays			
We deliver some services in schools and/or community settings			

Other – please specify:

--

4.3 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to testing procedures? Select all that apply:

Soundfield behavioural testing in addition to ear-specific testing	✓
Visual reinforcement audiometry or behavioural observation audiometry for adults	✓
Electrophysiological assessment in an outpatient setting	
Electrophysiological assessment under sedation or general anaesthetic	✓

Other – please specify:

--

4.4 What attempts are made to find out what the individual's needs are prior to the appointment (e.g., communication, physical, behavioural needs)?

Check referral letter	✓
Check hospital records	✓
Contact patient	
Contact family/key workers (as appropriate)	✓

Other – please specify:

--

4.5 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate communication? Select all that apply:

Ability to book communication support professionals where necessary (e.g., interpreters, speech-to-text reporters, lipspeakers)	✓
Range of options for contacting the service (e.g., email, mobile number with text option)	✓
Easy read versions of appointment letters	
Easy read versions of patient letters and reports of findings	

Other – please specify:

--

4.6 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to providing patient information? Select all that apply: N/A

Easy read patient information	
Pictorial resources explaining processes in clinic e.g., audiometry	
Video information about the department, staff and appointment	

Other – please specify:

4.7 Do you currently provide a choice of coloured moulds to people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people at no extra charge? Please select one answer:

Yes, always	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, never	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------

Yes, with limitations – please specify:

4.8 Does your service offer any of the following adaptations people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people	For anyone who needs them
Hearing aid fittings with 2 members of staff			✓
Speech testing to evaluate outcome			✓
Soundfield Aided thresholds			✓
RECD			✓
Additional follow-up review appointments to support acclimatisation / adaptation to amplification			✓
Training for carers and families on hearing aid use			✓
Training for carers and families on communication			✓
Easy read care plans			
Easy read information on hearing aid use			
Home visits to evaluate hearing aid use in a domestic setting			

### Section 5: Wax management

5.1 How is problematic wax managed in people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in your service? Select all that apply:

Advice issued re drops	✓
Referral to GP surgery	✓
Referral to mainstream ENT services	✓
Referral to ENT services with specialist skills re. people with intellectual disabilities	
Removal within Audiology clinic by Audiology staff	✓
Information about ear wax (risks, side effects, management etc.) offered in a range of formats (e.g., Easy Read).	

Other – please specify:

--

### Section 6: Specialist Services

**Specialist Services:** By specialist services, we mean audiological services which are provided separately from your mainstream provision, specialised for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people. This might mean an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting.

6.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, how many were seen by a specialist service as opposed to your mainstream service (please give a number for all that apply)? **We understand that you may not record these numbers.** If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state 'not recorded':

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
Specialist audiology service for people with complex needs	Not recorded	Not recorded
Mainstream audiology services	Not recorded	Not recorded
Mixture of mainstream and specialist service	Not recorded	Not recorded

6.2 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, what review processes were available (please select all that apply)?

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
Normal hearing – discharge, self-referral to return		
Normal hearing – routine review		
Hearing Loss – same review as mainstream service		
Hearing Loss – additional review appointments	✓	

6.3 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people that you saw between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, how many were offered the following services (please give a number for all that apply). **We understand that you may not record these numbers.** If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state 'not recorded':

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
Hearing Therapy	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
Vestibular assessment or rehabilitation	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
ENT	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
Cochlear Implant Services	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
Tinnitus assessment or rehabilitation	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
Sensory teams	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
Other Implantable Devices	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>

Other – please specify:

--

## Section 7: Meeting Relevant Guidance

7.1 How closely do you work to the following relevant guidance?

	Awareness	Implement in part	Implement in full	Not heard of
<b>Learning Disabilities Improvement Standards for NHS Trusts</b> <a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2926/v1.17_Improvement_Standards_added_note.pdf">https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2926/v1.17_Improvement_Standards_added_note.pdf</a>		✓		
<b>PMLD Service Standards:</b> <a href="http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/PMLD-service-standards">http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/PMLD-service-standards</a>		✓		
<b>The Accessible Information Standard</b> <a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/</a>		✓		
<b>British Society of Audiology Practice Guidance for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities</b> <a href="https://www.thebsa.org.uk/resources/access-to-audiology-services-for-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities/">https://www.thebsa.org.uk/resources/access-to-audiology-services-for-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities/</a>		✓		



## Section 8: Your policies

8.1 What documentation do you currently have specific to people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people? Select all that apply and indicate whether 'in place' or 'in progress'. These documents may be trust/hospital-specific or may be specific to your department/service.

	In place	In progress
Patient Pathway(s)	✓	
Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with people with intellectual disabilities	✓	
Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with autistic people		
Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with people with intellectual disabilities	✓	
Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with autistic people		
Risk Assessments (detail in question 9.2)		
Transition SOPs or policy	✓	

Other – please specify:

--

8.2 Do you carry out the following risk assessments? Select all that apply:

	Formal risk assessment	Informal risk assessment (risk identified and recorded in medical notes)
Challenging Behaviour		✓
Risks of inaccuracy of behavioural assessment		✓
Risk associated with communication barriers		✓
Discharging without ear-specific information		✓
Lack of sufficient support with hearing aid use		✓
Lack of equal access to services for people with intellectual disabilities		✓

Other, please specify:

--

8.3 How does your 'Did Not Attend' policy differ for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people to that of the wider patient population?

People with intellectual disabilities and/or their carer are contacted to enquire whether they received an appointment, they are able to attend hospital and preferred times of appointment.

--

### Section 9: Referral Routes

9.1 Of the new referrals of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people, that you received between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, where did the referrals originate from? Please select all that apply.

GP	✓
Community Learning Disabilities Team	✓
ENT	✓
Paediatric Audiology Services	
Newborn Hearing Screen	✓
Out-of-area Audiology Service	✓
Speech and Language Therapy	✓
School nursing team	✓
Community Paediatric team	✓
Hearing screening pathway for adults or children with intellectual disabilities	
Annual Health Check	
Other	

Other: (please specify)

--

### Section 10: Multidisciplinary Working

10.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities that you saw between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply and indicate estimate of frequency of referral.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>Speech and Language Therapy</b>			✓		
<b>Community Learning Disabilities Team</b>				✓	
<b>Teacher of the Deaf</b>			✓		
<b>Ear, Nose and Throat</b>			✓		

<b>Occupational Therapy</b>				✓	
<b>Other</b>					

10.2 Of the autistic people that you saw between 1<sup>st</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Speech and Language Therapy</b>					
<b>Community Learning Disabilities Team</b>					
<b>Teacher of the Deaf</b>					
<b>Ear, Nose and Throat</b>					
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>					
<b>Other</b>					

**No way to determine how many referrals were made.**

10.3 Do you have access to any of the following? Select all that apply:

Employer policies on working with people with intellectual disabilities	✓
Employer policies on working with autistic people	
Employer-provided training on working with people with intellectual disabilities	✓
Employer-provided training on working with autistic people	
Employer involvement in the Mencap Treat Me Well Campaign	✓
Effective links to other professionals with specialisms in working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people	✓

## **Section 11: Staffing and Training**

---

11.1 Are the staff (e.g., audiologists, receptionists) in your service able to access the CPD necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

All staff	✓
Some staff	
None	

If CPD is not available for all staff in your service, necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, please indicate why not (select all that apply):

Financial constraints	
Training expenses are not covered e.g., travel to training	
No cover for clinical duties	
Other: please specify	

11.2 If you offer a specialist service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, how many full-time equivalent staff were routinely involved on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021? (Please select all that apply). Specialist provision can include an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting. Please express part-time roles as a fraction of a full-time role e.g., 1 full-time role and a part-time role of 3 days would be 1.6 FTE.

Level	Permanent posts	Locum/ temporary posts	Trainees
Band 1			
Band 2			
Band 3			
Band 4			
Band 5			
Band 6	1 WTE (Whole Time Equivalent)		
Band 7	1 WTE (Whole Time Equivalent)		
Band 8 a			
Band 8b			
Band 8 c			

<b>Band 8 d</b>			
<b>Band 9</b>			
<b>Doctor specialising in audiology (paediatrician, audio vestibular physician etc)</b>			
<b>Other staff e.g., Volunteers and students</b>			

11.3 What training have the staff in your service been offered for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? (Please select all that apply)

	Clinical staff working in a specialist audiology service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people	Clinical staff who work with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in a mainstream audiology service	Non-clinical staff who work in the audiology service (e.g., receptionist, porter)
Mental Capacity Act training	✓	✓	✓
Communication training (relevant to those with intellectual disabilities e.g., Makaton etc)			
Learning Disability Awareness	✓	✓	✓
Autism Awareness			
Shadowing specialist clinics	✓	✓	✓
Accessible Information Standard Training			
Generic Violence and Aggression Training	✓	✓	✓
Challenging Behaviour	✓	✓	

Other, please detail:

--

## Section 12: Patient engagement and service evaluation

Please answer the questions in this section based on the situation as of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

12.1 What patient feedback mechanisms do you have in place for services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

<b>None</b>
-------------

What have been the most recent outcomes of patient feedback regarding services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

--

12.2 Do you audit/evaluate your service practices for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? Please give a brief explanation (1 or 2 sentences).

Yes (please specify how)	Audit of number of patients with hearing loss and how many patients require one or two testers
No (please specify why)	Evaluation does not happen currently, but this is something that we want to work towards

12.3 Are there any aspects of service delivery that you adapted during the Coronavirus pandemic, which you intend to retain beyond the end of restrictions (e.g., tele-audiology, telephone reviews)? Please give brief details and an explanation of why.

Promotion of self-management-production of videos/information leaflets to help patients/carers to maintain or repair their hearing aids. This method invokes independence and reduces the need for patients to wait for an appointment for their hearing aid to be repaired
---

12.6 Are there plans to develop your service for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people in the near future? Please give a brief description of any planned changes.

Yes. We plan to completely review the service to ensure that we are working within the standards set out in this document to implement quality improvement. The aim will be to audit and evaluate within the next six months.
---

**Many thanks for your time.**

