



Audiology Modernisation in Scotland

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You may have read or heard about the Scottish Executive providing extra money to the NHS in Scotland to modernise and improve audiology services.

Modernisation is expected to take 4 years, starting in 2003. It will be overseen by a Project Board that includes representation from the RNID as well as members of the NHS and the Scottish Executive.

What can you expect from a modernised service?

- To be provided with the most appropriate hearing aid to improve your quality of life.
 - To be tested and assessed by trained staff in proper accommodation.
 - To have sufficient time spent on you at your appointments.
 - To be given a better understanding of your hearing aid and its features.
 - To have a review a few weeks after you've been fitted with your aid to see if it is doing what it's supposed to do.
 - To have an improved network of support agencies when you leave the audiology department.
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How are the modernisation funds being used?

Funds are being used initially to provide proper testing facilities, equipment, staff training and procedures. This needs to be done to allow all hearing aids to be fitted effectively so you can get maximum benefit from them.

How soon can I expect to see a change?

Hospitals across Scotland are at different stages in their preparation for modernisation, so they will not all be able to provide a modernised service straight away. Some of the necessary work will take some while. Please be patient as it will be worth waiting for - you should be able to see some progress quite soon.

Does audiology modernisation mean I can have a digital hearing aid?

Modernisation **will** allow the routine provision of digital hearing aids, but digital hearing aids are not the answer to all hearing problems.

Everybody's hearing is different and a wide range of hearing aids is available to suit these different needs. The type of hearing loss and problems you experience will determine whether or not a digital hearing aid will be suitable for you. Audiologists will make the judgement on selecting a hearing aid which best meets your needs, based on the results of various tests and discussions with you. Please respect the advice of your audiologist.

If I don't get a digital aid does that mean the one I get will be useless?

No - many non-digital (analogue) aids are advanced technology hearing aids, ie they are good hearing aids.

What does digital actually mean?

"Digital" refers to the method the hearing aid uses to process sounds. The sounds can be altered very precisely to meet your needs - resulting in a "cleaner" sound quality.

It is important to note that digital aids are not necessarily small or made to fit right inside your ear.

Digital hearing aids provided by NHS clinics will be similar to those shown in the photographs below



In exceptional cases, you may be provided with an in-the-ear aid if you have a particular clinical or physical need for one.

Will a digital hearing aid cure my hearing problem?

The best a hearing aid can do is help you overcome your hearing impairment. A good hearing aid will help you hear better. It may help you cope with background noise - but it won't eliminate it. And no hearing aid can restore your hearing to normal.

How long will I have to wait for a digital aid?

To get the hearing aid that best meets your needs you must go through the normal routes, ie your GP or local audiology clinic.

To get a hearing aid for the first time your hearing must be assessed and the waiting times for hearing assessments depend on your local clinic's workload.

If you already have a hearing aid it is unlikely that your audiology clinic will be able to see you until you are due for a review, which is normally 2-3 years after your last fitting.

If you are worried that your hearing has deteriorated then check with your GP or local audiology department.

Why am I still waiting when one of my friends already has a digital aid?

As mentioned above, every hospital in Scotland is at a different stage in its preparation for providing digital aids, therefore, some may be issued with one before others.

Where Can I Get More Information?

RNID Scotland

Crowngate Business Centre
Brook Street
Glasgow
G40 3AP
Tel: 0141 550 5752

www.rnid.org.uk

Scottish Council on Deafness

Central Chambers Suite A
1st Floor
93 Hope Street
Glasgow
G2 6LD
Tel: 0141 248 2474

Copies of this leaflet are also available, on request, in other languages and formats, please contact: **0131 556 8400**. It can also be viewed on the Scottish Executive website at www.scotland.gov.uk