



Dear *parent/carer*

NHSE Guidance on the Hearing Check Project for Children and Young People in Residential Special Schools and Colleges

We are writing to invite your child to participate in a new NHS project which is taking place at High Close School

The Sensory Project is working to improve access to hearing checks for all children and young people who go to a residential special school. We are looking at the best way to check children and young people's hearing in this setting as we are aware of the importance of hearing for learning and communication, as well as for accessing sounds in the environment.

The quick and simple hearing checks will be undertaken by a familiar trained person in your child's school, and we would very much like your child to take part.

Please find information attached, that may answer some frequently asked questions.

You will, of course, be informed of the outcome of the hearing check. If we do not have a clear response from the hearing check of your child's ears, we will be in touch about a referral through your GP or local clinic to double check any results.

If you need more information or if there is anything that you consider we should know about your child in relation to the hearing checks, please do contact: Laura Byron

Email: lbyron@highclose.org.uk or your child's key/link worker who can pass on your questions to Laura Byron

We look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

High Close School hearing checks pilot team



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- I consent to my child having their ears checked and the results being shared for peer review with specialist audiologists.
- I consent to the NHS England and the Health Innovation Network collecting anonymised information about my child and their ear check to support the NHS to understand the best way to deliver hearing checks in residential special schools
- I consent to being contacted by the NHS project team to understand my views of the project
- I do not wish my child to take part in this project
- My child has a known hearing loss, is under the care of audiology or ENT or has a programmable programmable ventriculo- peritoneal (PVP) shunt and is therefore not eligible to take part in this programme.

Child/Young Person Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

DoB: Click or tap to enter a date.

Parent/Carer Signature: Click or tap here to enter text.

Today's Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Parent email address:



Some questions you may have?

1. Why are you doing these hearing checks now?

Hearing Check Project for Children and Young People in Residential Special Schools and Colleges

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the ambitions for the NHS in England and aims to improve children's health by making sure they get the right health checks at the right time. This includes hearing, site and dental checks. The overview and summary of the Plan is here:

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/overview-and-summary/>

Healthy ears are important and changes to hearing can develop after birth. We want to be sure that no child or young person are missed. Information about the project is here: <https://www.seeability.org/resources/parents-guide-hearing-care?IDMF=bb2fa0cc-bf7f-4a33-aca3-7c8bc9e1c82d>

2. What is involved in a Hearing Check?

Three checks may be used to assess the health of your child's ear. The checks are safe, simple and easy to do, and the results are reliable.

1. **Otoacoustic emissions (OAE)** Measures the response of the ear to sound. In the test a soft foam or rubber tip is placed in your child's ear. Your child's ears response to soft sounds will be automatically measured. This is similar to how new born babies hearing is checked
2. **Otoscopy:** this is a way that we can look into the ear. It gives a view of the ear canal and eardrum and helps us to see if there are any problems that might affect hearing. In some cases a picture may be taken and sent to a specialist to review.
3. **Tympanometry (pressure test):** this check looks at how well the eardrum is moving. The eardrum needs to be flexible to allow sound to pass through it. Sometimes children's ears can get blocked, which stops the ear drum moving freely and which may impact their hearing.



At all times your child will be comfortable. There is no need for your child to make any active response during the checks. Any over-sensitivity to sensory input will be considered.

The aim of these checks is to provide an overall picture of the health of your child or young person's ear.

The results will be checked by specialist audiologists

3. Some children and young people will not be eligible for the hearing check project.

Children who have a known hearing loss, or are under the care of audiology or ENT, on a regular follow up pathway will not be eligible for the project. If you feel their hearing has changed, please follow up with the audiology or ENT department who is responsible for their care.

Children and young people who have a programmable ventriculo-peritoneal (PVP) shunt, cannot undergo hearing screening as part of this project- if there is concern about their hearing then you should ask your GP to refer your child or young person to audiology directly.

4. Who are the Health Innovation Network?

The Health Innovation Network (HIN) is one of 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) across England. AHSNs were established to connect NHS and academic organisations, local authorities, the third sector and industry to increase the spread and adoption of innovation across large populations, at pace and scale. We are hosted by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and are the evaluation partner for the Hearing Check Project pilot

5. How are our views taken into account during the test and afterwards?

Any treatment and care that is provided as part of this process will take into account the needs and preferences of you and your child or young person.



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You will be involved in any decisions, in partnership with the professionals who are treating your child. It is helpful for us to have any information you think is relevant to your child's circumstances. This includes meeting the communication needs and preference of your child. We know that checking for healthy ears in children with autism and learning difficulties can be complex. This will be taken into account in the way the check is done.

6. What is known about hearing in children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

It has been estimated that around one in three people with a learning disability may also have difficulties with hearing or vision at some time. This makes it important to check hearing and vision. Healthy ears and good hearing are important for speech and language development, two-way communication and access to learning.

7. Why check our child's hearing now?

Changes to hearing can develop after birth and these may not be picked up without a hearing check. Some young people, born before 2006 or who were not born in England, may not have accessed hearing screening at birth. We want to be sure that no children and young people are missed.

8. What happens if the hearing check result for my child does not give a clear response?

There are a number of reasons why a hearing check may not give a clear response. It may be that your child did not feel well that day. They may also have had a temporary hearing problem caused by a cold or a build-up of wax.

Further hearing checks, to give a more complete picture, usually take place in a clinic. This could be with an audiologist, ear doctor or paediatrician. If this is the case, the person who has done the hearing check in school may ask you to speak to your GP to do this. Your follow up letter from school will explain the next steps.



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These further checks may be a repeat of the checks performed at school, but in a clinical setting. They might also include other checks which are right for your child. These will be discussed with you by the healthcare team responsible for your child or young person's care.

9. What happens if we are unable to check my child's hearing?

If for some reason the check is not able to be completed during the pilot project, then the project team will attempt to familiarise, desensitise or try a different approach for your child or young person. For some children and young people, the check may not be able to be completed; in this instance, if there is no concern about their hearing, then they will not be referred for additional testing. If there is concern, and the check cannot be completed at school, then as with any child or young person where there is concern about their hearing, they should be referred for further assessment.

10. What support and follow up can my family expect?

You will receive a letter after the hearing check which will let you know that your child's ears are healthy or whether they might need checking again.

After the follow up check you and your child will receive information and advice from specialist health and education professionals, should it be required.

11. How will we be consulted if further treatment or intervention is needed?

If treatment is necessary, you will, at that time, be given the opportunity to discuss the different options. You can ask any questions you want to and can always change your mind. Your own preference for a particular treatment is also important and should be discussed with the healthcare professionals treating your child, educational audiologist from the hospital or local authority sensory impairment support service or specialist teachers if they are involved.

Your child's treatment and care, and the information you are given about it, should take account of any religious, ethnic or cultural needs your family may have. It should also take into account any additional factors, such as physical or learning disabilities, sight or hearing problems.



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12. Other sources of help

The leading charity for deaf children is The National Deaf Children's Society. Their information and resources can be found at www.ndcs.org.uk

All local authorities (LA) in England must produce a 'Local Offer' giving details of local services (including education, health and social care) that they expect to be available to children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND. Your Local Offer will be on, or linked to from, the website of your LA. If you type the name of your local authority and the words 'Local Offer' into a search engine it will usually find the website. If you're not sure who your local authority is, you can find out here: www.gov.uk/find-local-council