

# Hyperacusis Management and Hearing Therapy Services

## Patient information

**This information is for people who have hyperacusis and other forms of reduced sound tolerance. In it, you will find information about the management of hyperacusis and other forms of reduced sound tolerance, including services available at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.**

When you spoke to your doctor about oversensitivity to sound, you may have been referred to the audiology or the ear-nose and throat (ENT) department. You would most likely have had the opportunity to talk a bit about your oversensitivity and why it's troublesome for you, and you may have had a few tests done, including a hearing test.

Having had your investigations, you may be encouraged to try some strategies to help you with your oversensitivity. These are often very useful and a good way to help you reduce the impact of your tinnitus in your everyday life.

This leaflet will provide you with an overview of these strategies with some additional leaflets included in this pack to give you some more detail on each management option.

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## Management Options for Hyperacusis and other forms of reduced sound tolerance

### Sound Therapy

People are often surprised to hear that the main way that we manage reduced sound tolerance is by introducing sound. The idea is not simply to start listening to all sound again – we reintroduce sound in a very controlled way so that you can start to increase your tolerance to sound. There are a number of formal and informal ways that you can introduce sound (see ‘Sound Therapy’ from the British Tinnitus Association included in this pack).

### Talking about hyperacusis and other forms of reduced sound tolerance

It can be really useful to talk about your oversensitivity and the impact it is having on your everyday life. Sometimes having someone to listen to what you are going through can make all the difference in feeling better. The British Tinnitus Association run a free tinnitus helpline, which you can call. The telephone number is 0800 018 0527.

### Counselling for hyperacusis and reduced sound tolerance

Some people need a bit of extra support while they learn to manage their reduced sound tolerance. At St Georges Healthcare NHS Trust, we offer a hearing therapy service for people who need some extra input. Please see below for more details.

## What is Hearing Therapy?

Hearing Therapy is part of the greater audiology department. People get referred to hearing therapy for help with a range of problems, including adjusting to having hearing loss, maximising hearing, tinnitus (noises in the ears or head) and hyperacusis (oversensitivity to sound).

### What does therapy involve?

The hearing therapist’s role is to support you while you try to find a way of coping with your difficulties. This may involve some strategies, such as the use of sound, but it may also involve a counseling-based approach, where you are offered support to find ways of reintroducing sound into your everyday life in a manageable way. Some people make a good recovery, but everyone is different and some people remain sensitive to sound. In these cases, it’s really important that you have support from hearing therapy as you adapt to living with a long-term condition.

### How many times do I need to see someone?

An important part of the process is your assessment. This will happen first. You may be asked to fill in some questionnaires and then to discuss your difficulties in detail with the therapist. The main focus of the assessment is to get an understanding of how you are currently managing and what your

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needs are. The sound diary that is included is very useful for helping us know where we need to focus your rehabilitation, so please do complete it and bring it with you to the first appointment.

Once your assessment is completed, you will spend some time setting goals for therapy and deciding how you can work together with the therapist to achieve your goals. You are encouraged to participate fully in this so it helps to consider your goals before this session.

Having decided on a management plan, you will meet fairly regularly with your therapist to work towards your goals. The number of sessions and how far apart they are depends very much on each individual's situation. Typically, you can expect anything from 3 to 10 sessions. The maximum number of sessions is 10.

## How to get an appointment

You can be referred by your ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultant, audiovestibular physician or audiologist. You can also be referred by your GP as long as you have recently seen an ENT consultant or audiovestibular physician.

Once you are referred, your letter is read by the hearing therapy team and passed on to the central booking service, who will send you an appointment. Please note there is a waiting list for an appointment.

If you decide that hearing therapy is not for you, please cancel your appointment. Please note that if you do decide not to proceed with hearing therapy, this does not affect any appointments you may have with audiology and/or your consultant.

### **If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, you can contact:**

Department of Audiology & Audiological Medicine

Ground floor

Lanesborough Wing

St George's Hospital

Blackshaw Road

Tooting

SW17 0QT

Telephone: 020 8725 1151 (enquiries)

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*Note: this form is under review and is subject to change following recommendations from the Patient Information Group*