**Briefing**

**Title: New approach for support and earlier detection of children’s hearing concerns**

**Context**

In December 2016, Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet approved a remodelling of the Health Visiting and School Nursing services to bring them together into a single 0-19 years Public Health Nursing Service. Following a 2017 Public Consultation and evidence of effectiveness it was decided that from October 2018 the current hearing screening programme for state school children in Reception (aged 4-5 years) would be replaced with a focus on making sure parents and professionals can access support when they have a concern by implementing a new pathway for earlier detection and support

This pathway has been developed to ensure that where there are concerns about a child’s hearing a referral can be made to audiology for their hearing to be tested. **Requests for a referral to audiology can be made using the referral form by health professionals and professionals from schools, early years settings or children’s social care.**

Referral requests will need to be presented by the parent to a health professional or GP surgery, who will make a referral into audiology for that child. There is no requirement for these children to have an appointment with the health professional or GP.  This is a pilot and its effectiveness will be reviewed after 6 months to ensure that children with hearing difficulties are not getting missed by this new pathway.

**Pathway**

**Hearing problems in children -Gloucestershire referral pathway**

*Pathway completed Dec 2018*

*Review date Dec 2019*

Parent or Carer has concerns regarding a child’s hearing

Health Professional has concerns regarding a child’s hearing

Non-Health Professional (Education, Early Years and Social Care) has concerns regarding a child’s hearing

Parent or Carer to Raise concern with GP, or other Health Professional e.g. Speech and Language Therapist or Public Health Nursing.

Discuss hearing concerns with Parent/Carer

Refer to Paediatric Audiology

Non-Health Professional to follow up with Parent/Carer to ensure action has been taken.

Discuss hearing concerns with Parent/Carer and if appropriate, source a referral form from the appropriate platforms and advise Parent/Carer to take the letter to GP Practice, Public Health Nurse or other Health Professional to make a referral to audiology.

Parent / Carer presents letter to GP Practice or other Health Professional who make a referral to audiology.

*Please note***no appointment needed**

Paediatric Audiology is a service staffed by community pediatricians and audiologists that assesses the hearing of children and provides onward management of any problems identified. This specialist service is delivered at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital. Additional clinics held in Tewkesbury and Cirencester assess school-age children only.

If a child is assessed by the Paediatric Audiology Service as having hearing difficulties further support can be accessed from:

**Resources**

|  |  |
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|  | Slides Pack with Update |
|  | Referral to Paediatric Audiology Clinics  *To be used by health professionals* |
|  | Referral recommendation to Paediatric Audiology Clinics  *To be used by education, social care and early years professionals and practitioners.* |
|  | Children hearing loss signs poster with Gloucestershire Family Directory link |
|  | Children hearing loss signs poster which can be amended  *Note – once the poster is amended it needs to be converted into PDF format.* |

The referral form and poster can be downloaded from the following platforms;

* Gcare for health professionals
* Gloucestershire Early Years Service
* Gloucestershire SENCOSPOT
* Gloucestershire Family Directory Practitioner Section

**Ongoing services**

## The Advisory Teaching Service - Team for Hearing Impairment

Qualified Specialist Advisory Teachers of the Deaf work with children from birth to 25 years who experience difficulties relating to a diagnosed inner ear or auditory nerve related hearing loss.

**Referrals**

* At pre-school stage - either through a health professional or via their early years setting.
* At school age - through SENCo or a Health Professional

**Contact**

Website: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/advisory-teaching-service/>

## Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) - Community Service

Speech & language therapists are qualified professionals with an in-depth knowledge of difficulties with communication (understand & using spoken language and social communication skills) and eating & drinking disorders. They provide assessment, advice and treatment planned around the individual needs of the child & family.Speech and language therapists will always conduct a hearing test alongside a speech and language examination

**Referrals**

* Children can be referred to the service by their parents or by another health or educational professional with the parent’s permission.

**Contact:**

* Website: <https://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/our-services/children-young-people/slt>
* Telephone: 0300 421 8937

**Useful links for signposting**

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| [National Deaf Children’s Society](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/) | The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. |
| [Gloucestershire Deaf Association](https://www.gda.org.uk/) | Gloucestershire Deaf Association (GDA) is the frontline organisation delivering specialist services and community activities for deaf and hard of hearing adults and children in Gloucestershire. |
| [NHS Website – Hearing Loss](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hearing-loss/symptoms) | The NHS website provide useful information on hearing loss in children and babies. |
| [Talking Point](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/) | Talking Point is a website all about children’s speech, language and communication. It is designed for parents, people that work with children, and children and young people themselves |
| Glosfamilies Directory Includes information on Local offer for SEN & Disabilities and Family information & Services follow the link <http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/home.page> | |