

Getting hearing aids

 **ACTION ON
HEARING
LOSS**

A national charity since 1911



Easy read

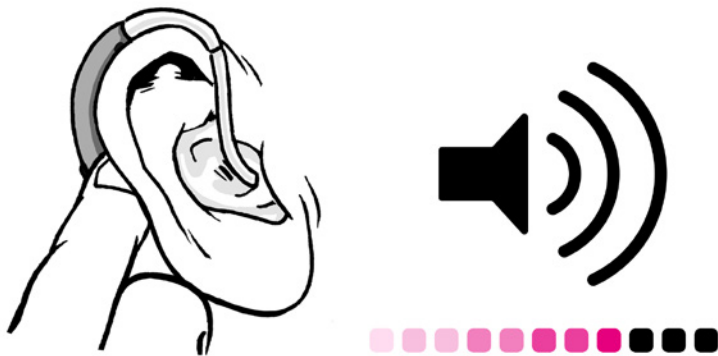
Developed in partnership
by Action on Hearing Loss
and CHANGE



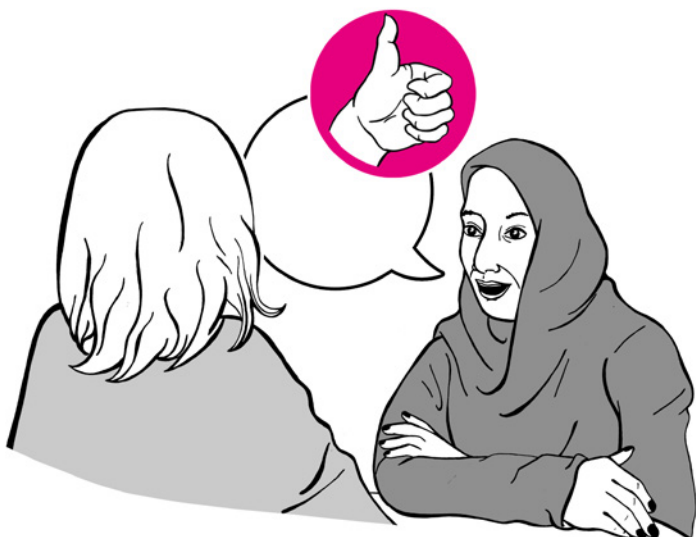
How hearing aids could help you



Many people with hearing loss tell us that hearing aids are very helpful.



They won't make you hear perfectly, but they should help you hear lots of sounds you find difficult by making them louder.



They should help you to hear people talking better, which will make it easier for you to communicate.



They should help you hear everyday sounds like the doorbell and telephone ringing.



Most hearing aids can also reduce some background noises. This will make listening more comfortable.



However hearing aids can't cut out all background noise. For example, you might still struggle to hear one person if lots of people are talking at once.



You can buy products that you can use with your hearing aids to help you hear when there is a lot of background noise.

How you can get hearing aids

NHS

Private



You can get hearing aids free from the NHS or buy them from a private hearing service.



You will need to have your hearing tested to make sure hearing aids can help you and so the hearing specialist knows how to fit them to your needs.



To get your hearing tested on the NHS, make an appointment to see your GP, who can refer you to an NHS hearing service.



You don't need to wait to see your GP first if you want to go to a private hearing service for your hearing test.

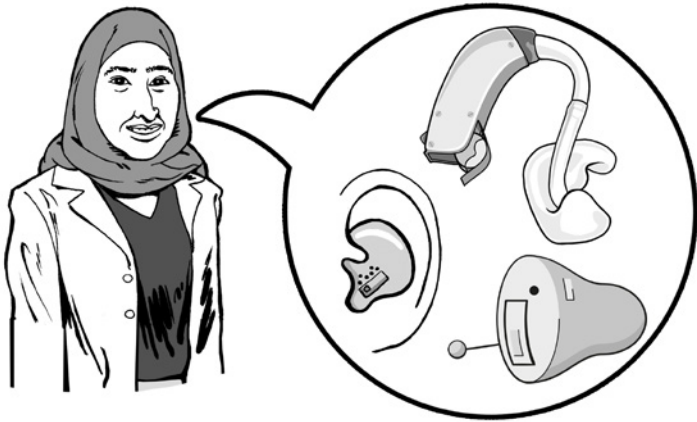


But you may still want to see a GP first, in case the reason for your hearing loss is a blocked ear or an ear infection that can be treated.



To find out more about hearing tests, see our leaflet **How's your hearing?**

Different types of hearing aids



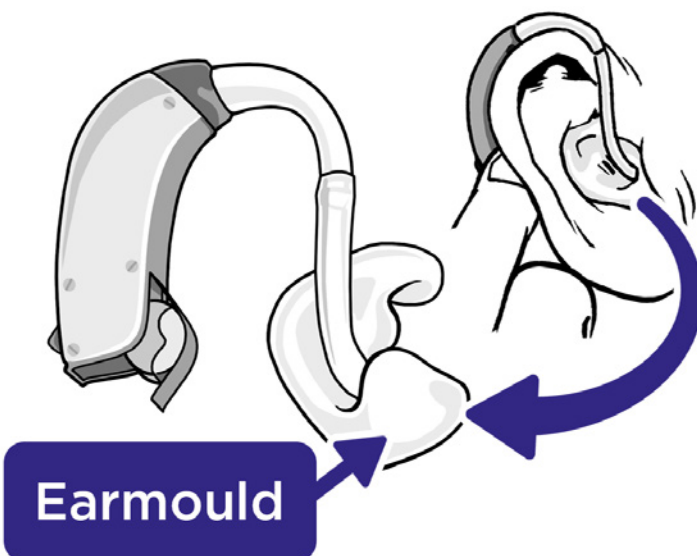
If you need hearing aids, your hearing specialist will tell you which type of hearing aid will help you the most.

NHS



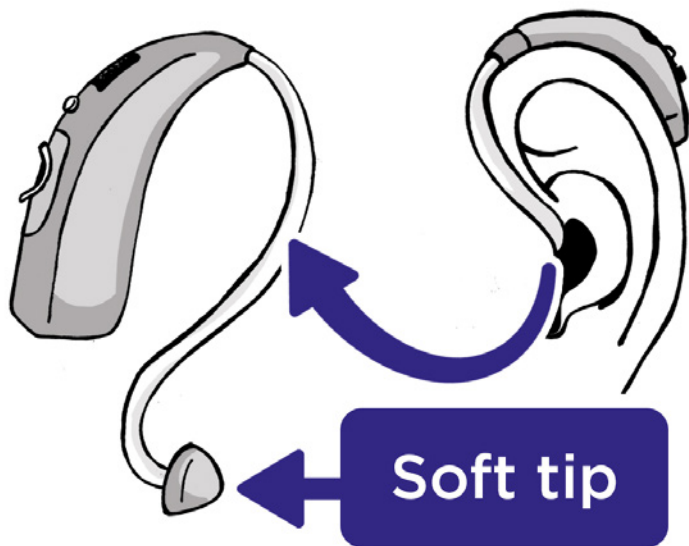
Behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids

The most common hearing aids on the NHS are **behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids**.

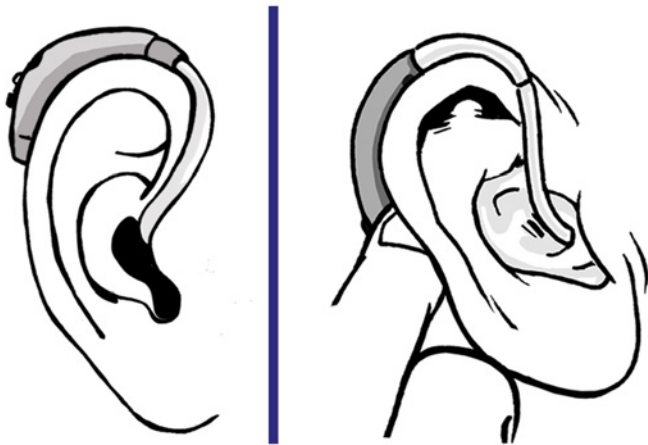


BTE hearing aids go behind your ear. They come with one of three different earpieces:

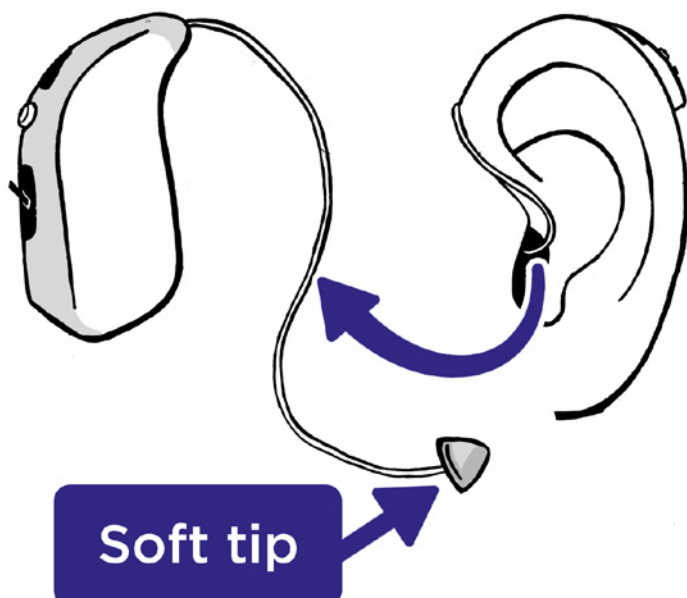
1. An earmould that fits inside your ear.



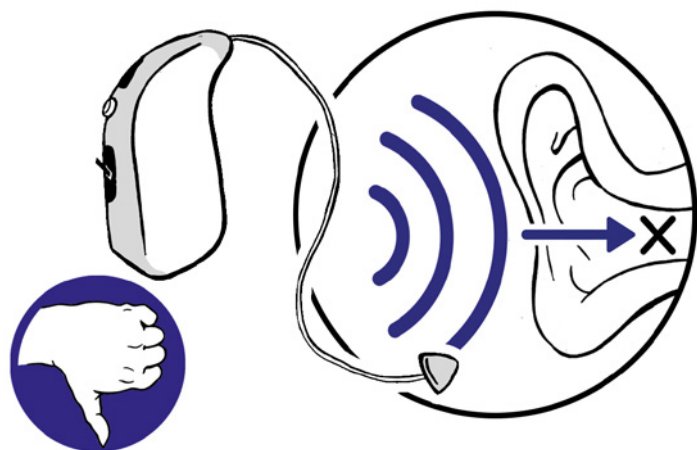
2. A soft tip that sits inside your ear canal. This type of earpiece is also called a dome or an open ear fitting.



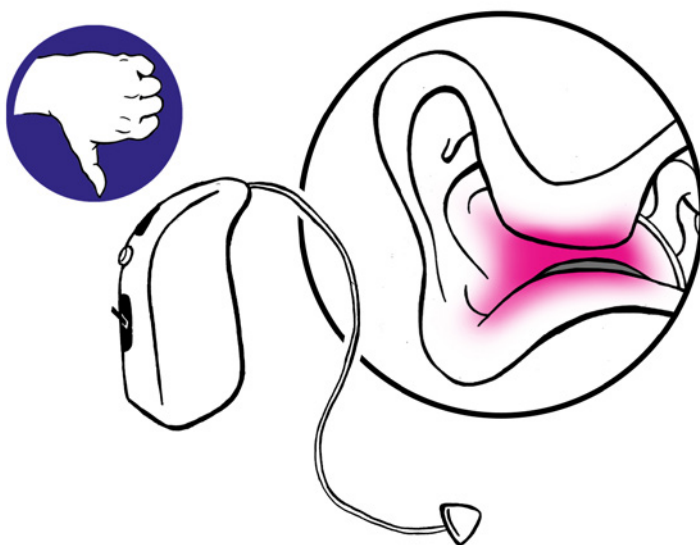
You can't see a soft tip as much as an earmould. It may give a more natural sound because it doesn't block the ear as much.



3. A small speaker that sits inside a soft tip. There are different names for this earpiece but it's sometimes called a receiver in the ear.



Soft tips and receivers in the ear are not good for all types of hearing loss.

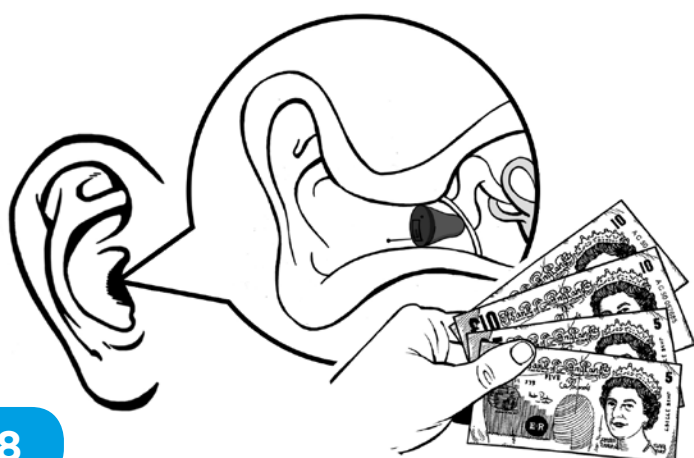


They can be fiddly to put in and won't be good if you get a lot of ear infections.

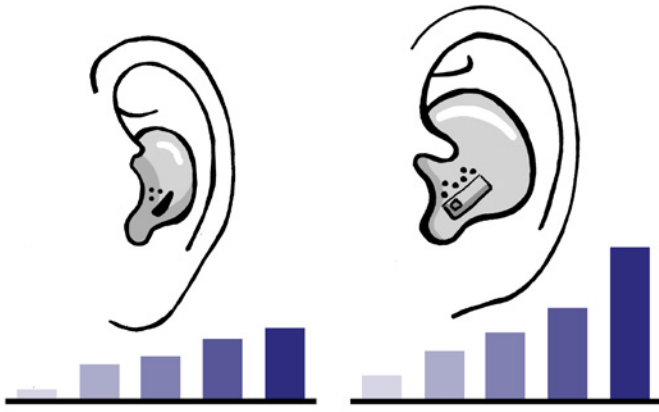


Hearing aids that fit inside your ear

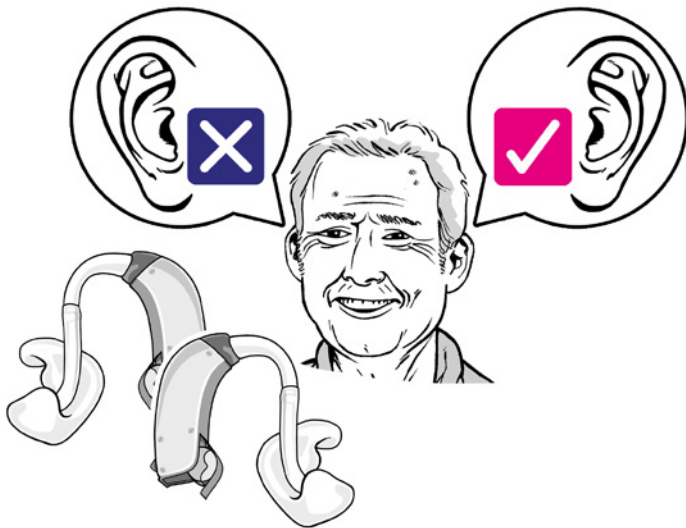
Some small hearing aids have their working parts in the earpiece, so the whole aid fits into your ear.



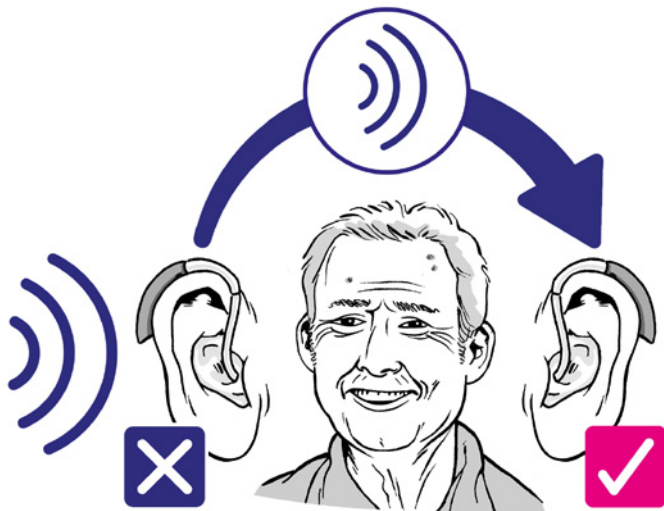
You normally have to buy these hearing aids privately.



There are different sizes for people with different levels of hearing loss and different sized ears.



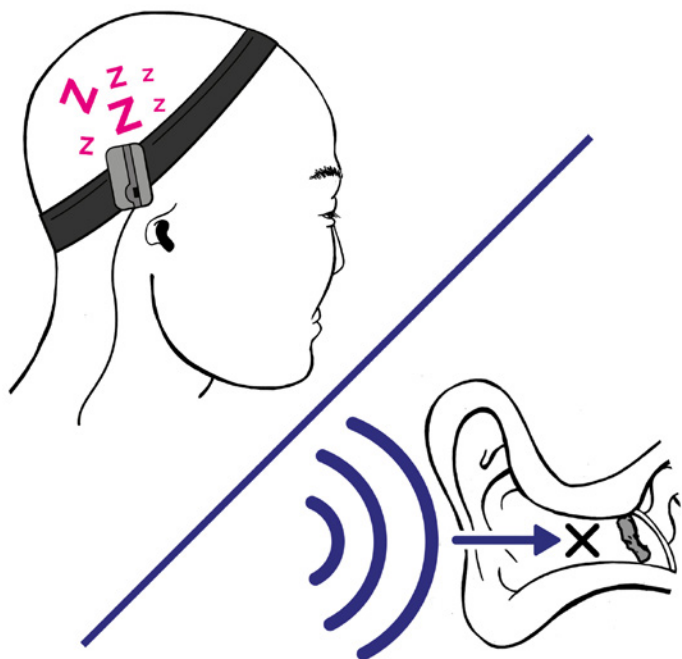
CROS and BiCROS hearing aids are for people who can only hear in one ear.



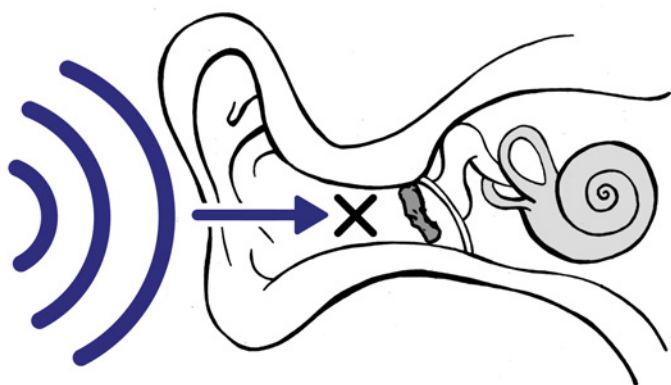
CROS hearing aids pick up sound from your deaf ear and send it to your hearing ear.



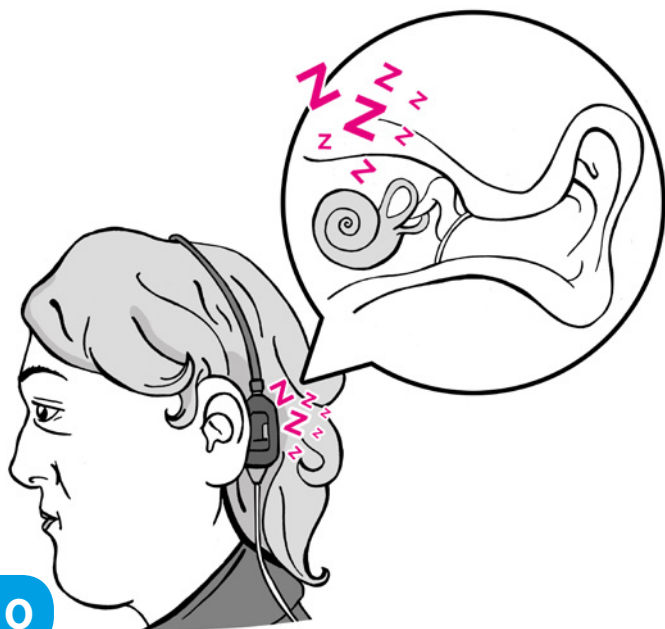
BiCROS hearing aids pick up sound from both sides and send it to the better hearing ear. There are wireless ones you can get from the NHS.



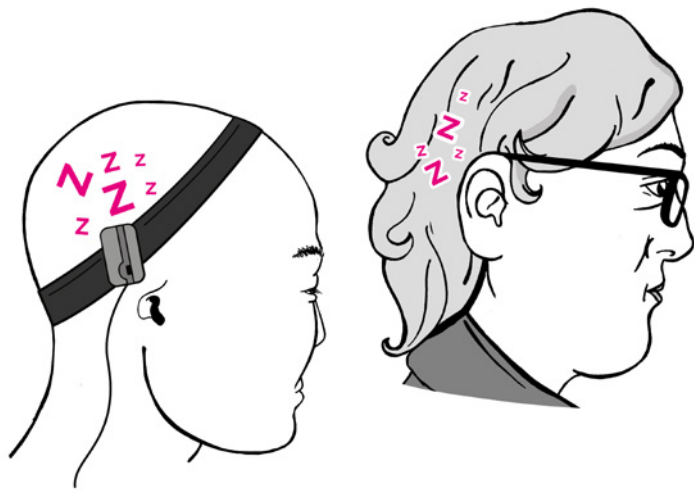
Bone-conduction hearing aids are for people who can't wear normal hearing aids or for people with a conductive hearing loss.



Conductive hearing loss is where sound waves can't get to your cochlea (the part of your ear that hears) in the inner ear.

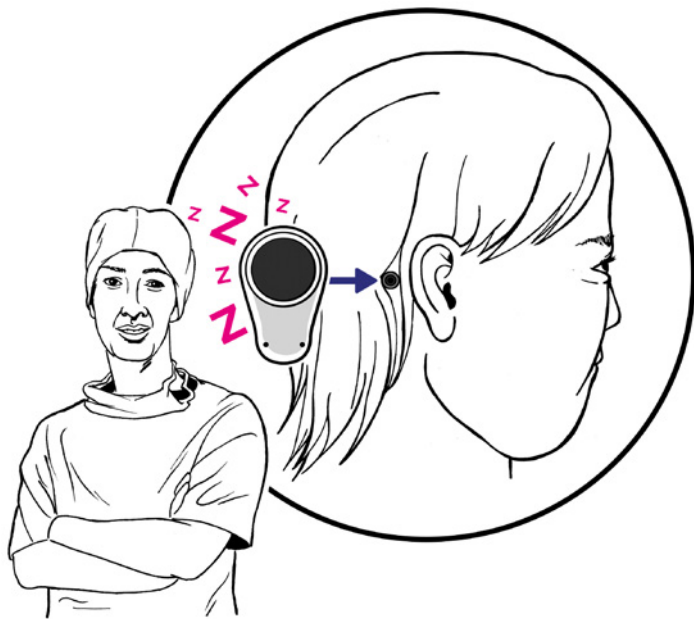


This type of hearing aid sends sound to the cochlea through your skull, using vibrations.



There are two types of bone-conducting hearing aids:

For one type you need to wear a headband or glasses that have a bone conductor attached.



For the other type you need to have an operation to put a fixture on your skull. Then you can clip a bone-anchored hearing aid (BAHA) behind your ear.

Choosing your hearing aids



You can't always choose the type of hearing aid you get from the NHS.



But you will be given digital hearing aids that fit well and that are good for your type of hearing loss.

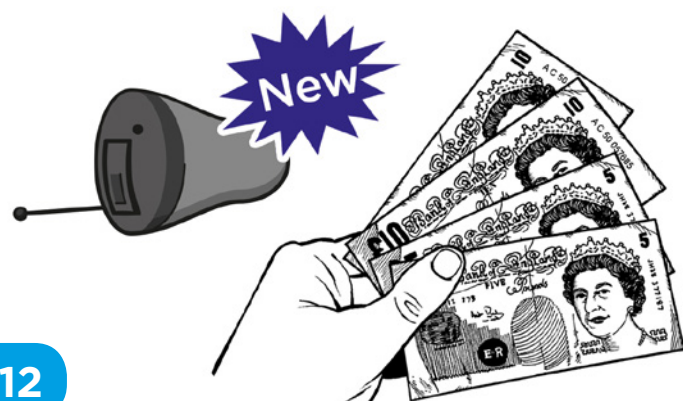


If you buy your hearing aids privately, you'll be able to choose your hearing aids and spend as much as you want to on them.

Private hearing aids costs



Private hearing aids usually cost between £500 and £3,500, but sometimes they cost more.



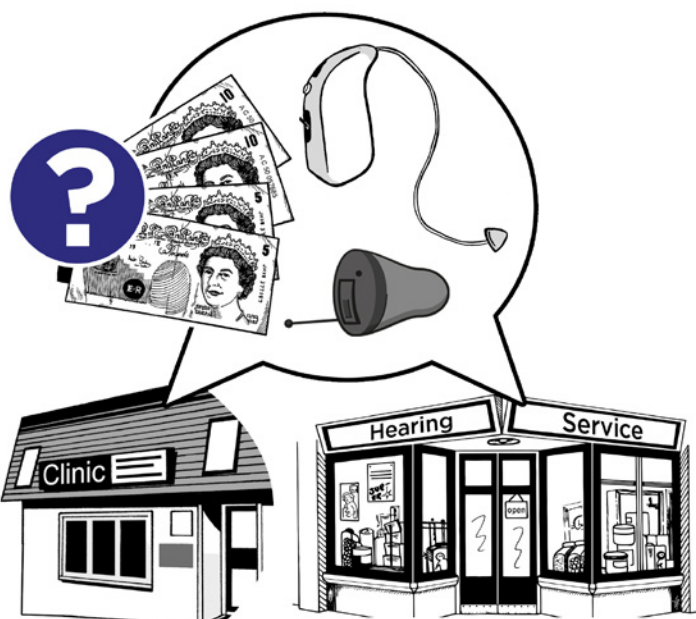
You'll have to pay again when your hearing aids need replacing.



You'll also need to pay for any new earmoulds, tubing and batteries, and you might have to pay for repairs.



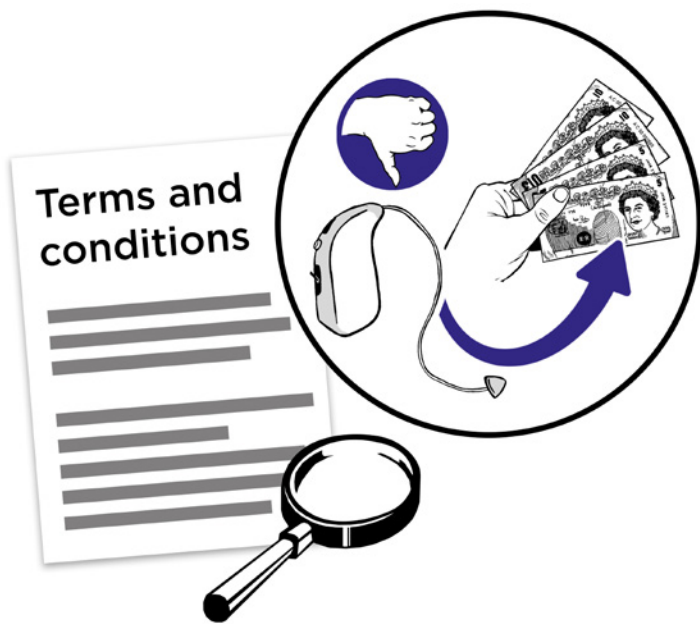
Ask your audiologist to explain what you'll need and to help you understand how much it might cost you in the future.



If you want to buy hearing aids, go to different hearing services to see what different types they offer and how much they are.

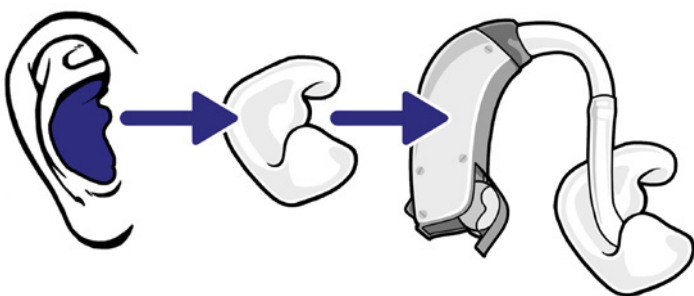


It's also worth checking you're not spending your money on a model that you could get free from the NHS.

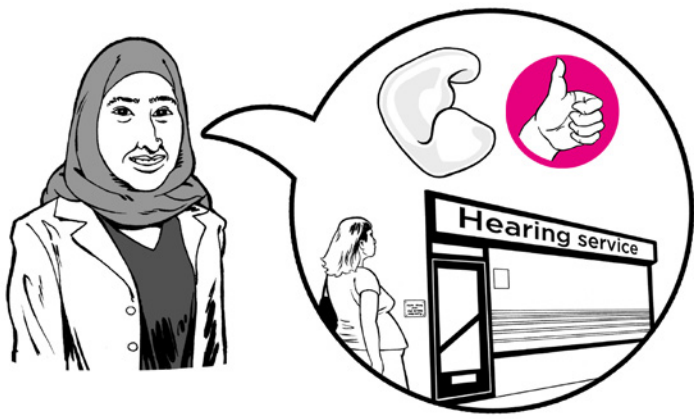


Read the terms and conditions of the contract before you sign it, and check there is a money-back guarantee, in case they don't work for you.

Getting your hearing aids fitted



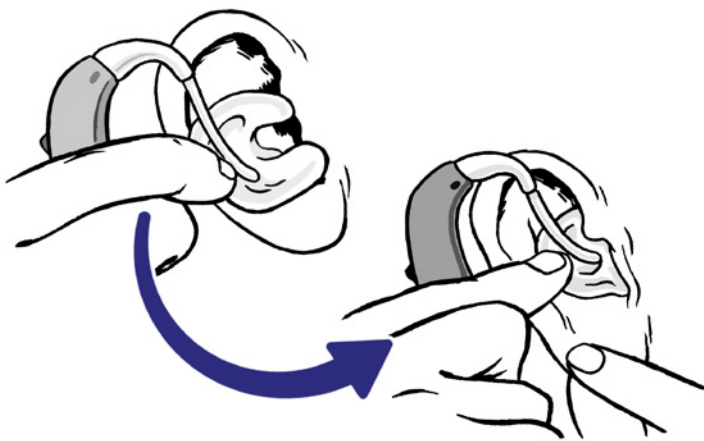
If you need earmoulds for your hearing aids, the hearing specialist will put some material like wax or foam in your ear to make a mould of the shape.



They'll ask you to come back to get your new hearing aids when the earmoulds are ready.



The hearing specialist will ask you questions and set your hearing aids to your needs using a computer.

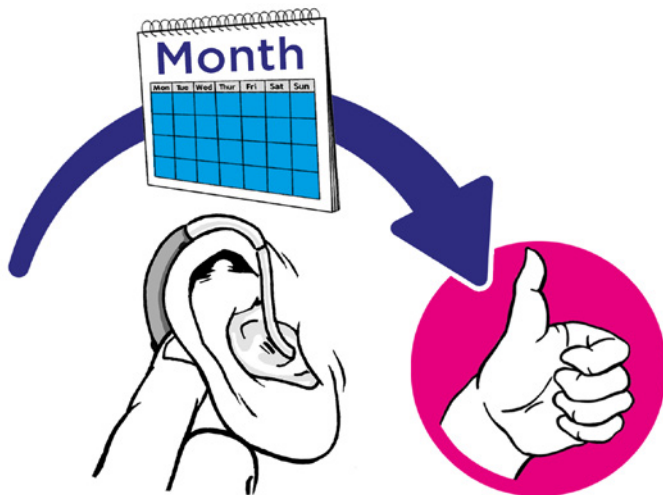


The hearing specialist will make sure your hearing aids are comfortable and show you how to use and look after them. This will include how to put them in and take them out.



Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions if you need to.

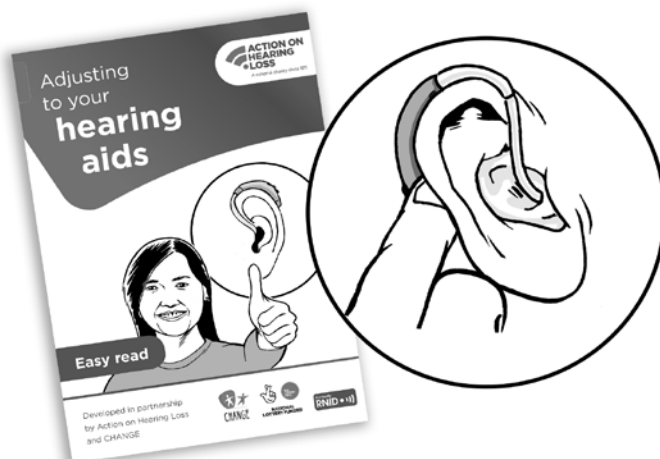
Adjusting to your hearing aids



It can take time to get used to hearing aids. For some people it takes about a month to get used to them but for some people it is longer.



If you are having problems with your hearing aids don't give up. If you tell your hearing specialist, they can help you.



Find out more about fitting, using and looking after your hearing aids in our Easy Read leaflet **Adjusting to your hearing aids**.

Help from us at Action on Hearing Loss



If you get NHS hearing aids, we may be able to help you look after them.



We have drop-in centres and can sometimes visit people.



Contact our Information Line on **0808 808 0123** to find out more.

More information



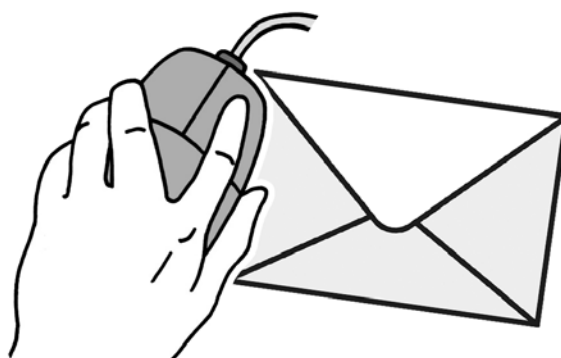
Experts and people with hearing loss help us write our information to make sure it's right.



For more information about hearing loss, call our Information Line on **0808 808 0123**.



You can also send a text message to **07800 000 360**.



You can also email **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

Other information in Easy Read



How's your hearing?



Adjusting to your hearing aids



Communication tips for people with hearing loss



Communication tips for speaking to someone with hearing loss

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) is the largest UK charity helping people who are confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.

We give support and care, develop technology and treatments, and campaign for equality.

We rely on donations to continue our vital work.

To find out more, visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Questions about deafness, tinnitus or hearing loss?
Contact our free, confidential Information Line:

Telephone **0808 808 0123**

Textphone **0808 808 9000**

SMS **0780 000 0360**

(standard text message rates apply)

Email **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

Join us

 **Action on Hearing Loss**

 **@ActionOnHearing**



Published: July 2018. Version 1. Review date: July 2019.

Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926).
A1452/0918