Hear4All

Hearing Champion Handbook

A free, practical guide for care home staff on looking after residents' hearing and hearing aids.

Your role

A Hearing Champion is a member of staff who leads hearing care day to day. You don't need to be an expert. You need to care about residents' hearing, know the basics well and help others do the same.

1. Encourage daily hearing aid checks on every shift.
2. Support colleagues with hearing aid care and communication.
3. Identify residents who need professional support, such as a hearing assessment or ear examination.
4. Maintain hearing care equipment: listening kits, TV listeners, loops, batteries and spares.
5. Coordinate referrals with the nurse, GP, audiology and suppliers.
6. Monitor hearing accessibility around the building.
7. Help embed hearing care into daily routines, care plans and induction.

> You are not expected to examine ears, remove wax, diagnose or repair hearing aids. Urgent problems always go to the nurse in charge, GP, NHS 111 or 999.

Your routine

Getting started

- Complete Hear4All Hearing Champion training
- Agree time for the role with your manager
- Complete the Hearing Friendly Care Home self-assessment with your manager
- List every resident with hearing needs, their equipment and supplier
- Introduce yourself to residents, families and colleagues

Every week

- Complete the weekly hearing care checklist
- Follow up any hearing aid problems or referrals
- Check equipment, batteries and chargers
- Spend time on the floor helping colleagues

Every month

- Review lost hearing aid incidents and agree actions
- Run a 10-minute team huddle on one hearing care topic
- Check new residents have a hearing passport
- Update the manager on progress and problems

Every year

- Repeat the self-assessment and environment audit
- Check staff training records and arrange refreshers
- Review local contacts: GP practice, NHS audiology, Hear4All and other suppliers, interpreters

Hear4All, 3 Bassett Avenue, Southampton SO16 7DP. Free hearing and communication reviews for care home residents. Online version: www.hear4all.org/hearing-friendly-care-home/handbook/. General information only: always follow your care home's policies, the manufacturer's instructions and the resident's care plan. In an emergency call 999. Version: November 2026.

Questions care homes ask

How do you look after hearing aids in a care home?

Check every resident's hearing aids each morning: charged or with a working battery, clean, dome and wax filter clear, and in the right ear (red or R for right, blue or L for left). Wipe them with a dry cloth or the manufacturer's wipe, never water or alcohol. At night, store them in the labelled case or charger. Record any problem and tell the Hearing Champion.

What should carers check when a hearing aid isn't working?

Use a four-step check. 1) Power: is it charged, or the battery fresh and the battery door closed? 2) Blockage: is the wax filter, dome or tube blocked? 3) Fit: is it in the correct ear and pushed fully in? 4) The ear: does the resident have signs of earwax? If it still doesn't work, contact the audiologist; a loan aid can be provided during repairs.

How can care staff tell if a resident has a hearing problem?

Common signs are turning the TV up, asking people to repeat, answering the wrong question, withdrawing from groups or meals, watching faces closely, saying people mumble, or seeming more confused than usual. Any of these is a reason to request a hearing check.

What are the signs of earwax in a care home resident?

Muffled hearing, a blocked or full feeling, a hearing aid that whistles or sounds weak, or wax visible on the dome or filter. Don't use cotton buds. Book a professional ear check and microsuction earwax removal if needed.

What should a care home do when a hearing aid is lost?

Search bedding, clothing, laundry, food trays and chair cushions straight away, record the incident, and tell the family and the audiologist. Labelling hearing aids and using anti-loss strings helps prevent losses, and monthly reviews of incidents show where losses happen.

What if a resident refuses to wear their hearing aids?

Ask why: hearing aids are often refused because they are uncomfortable, whistling, too loud, blocked with wax or not set for the resident's hearing. Try them at the times that matter most, such as visits, meals and activities, and ask the audiologist to review the fit and settings.

When is an ear or hearing problem urgent?

Contact the nurse in charge and the GP or NHS 111 the same day for ear pain, discharge or bleeding, sudden hearing loss, or sudden dizziness. Call 999 if hearing loss comes with signs of stroke such as facial drooping, arm weakness or slurred speech.

What does a Hearing Champion do in a care home?

A Hearing Champion is a member of staff who leads hearing care day to day: encouraging daily hearing aid checks, supporting colleagues, spotting residents who need a hearing assessment, looking after listening equipment, coordinating referrals and building hearing care into care plans. They don't examine ears, remove wax or repair hearing aids.

Useful contacts

Hear4All (audiology, earwax removal, hearing aids, training): 023 8244 4045 · info@hear4all.org · www.hear4all.org

NHS audiology service: _____ GP practice: _____

Other hearing aid providers used by residents: _____ BSL interpreter booking: _____