

Welcome to the winter edition of Hearability News

I am pleased to announce that there are now hearing practices in Eastergate, Walberton and Yapton every Thursday afternoon. This brings the total number of GP Surgeries providing localised hearing examinations and hearing care in West Sussex to seven.

It gives me greater pleasure to welcome aboard Liam Thompson who has joined the company to help us in our expansion into East Sussex. Furthermore Liam is both a Registered Hearing Aid Dispenser and qualified NHS audiologist which will be a great asset delivering hearing care within the GP Surgeries.

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Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and prosperous 2009.

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Registered Hearing Aid Audiologist & Nurse

"We only hear what we want to hear" - True or False?

Well actually it is more true than it is false. The brain plays a very important part in the way we interpret and process sound.

Most of us hear well and so don't give much thought to how we hear but hearing starts with a very complex set of actions within the outer, middle and inner ear. These actions allow our brain to understand sounds. For example the ears are two separate organs but the brain allows us to hear in stereo and at precise synchronicity. If you put one ear close to a speaker or turn your head to concentrate a sound to one ear, despite the fact one ear is much closer to the sound than the other ear, the brain ensures we hear the sound in unison. Furthermore the ability to hear in stereo allows the brain to understand in which direction a sound is coming from.

This partially explains why an audiologist will often recommend two hearing instruments although a hearing loss maybe concentrated to one ear more than the other. With the two hearing aids sharing the same technology and capability the brain can more easily process sound in the way it is used to. The medical or scientific term for hearing is Auditory Processing.

The degree to which the brain is involved in the hearing process has been the subject of research by the Hearing Research Unit of the Medical Research Council that have concluded that people do suffer Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). This is when people's ears are working well but they cannot understand the sound they hear.



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New Hearing Practices in West Sussex

Patients in the Barnham and surrounding area can now benefit from local Hearing Care Practices at the **Croft Practice, Barnham Road, Eastergate**, the **Meadow Croft Surgery, Bilsham Road, Yapton** and the **Flintcroft Surgery, The Street, Walberton**.

Hearing tests are completely free and appointments can be booked through the Croft Practice reception on 01243 543240 or at the Hearability Hearing Care Centre on 01903 237732.

There are localised Hearing Practices also at the Maywood Health Centre, Bognor Regis, The Arundel Surgery, Arundel, The Brow Medical Centre, Burgess Hill and the Ouse Valley Practice, Handcross.



A warm welcome to Liam Thompson RHAD

We are pleased to welcome aboard Liam Thompson who joins us from January 5th 2009.

Liam started his career in audiology within the NHS achieving the post of Chief Audiologist before qualifying as a Registered Hearing Aid Dispenser. Liam lives with his partner Holly in Eastbourne and has particular expertise in Db Monitoring for Health & Safety and the preparation of 'Safe Zones' within the workplace. This specialism and NHS experience will make him a major asset to the team.



If you are a Practice Manager or Senior Partner in a GP surgery and would like to know details of the provision of localised private hearing care services by Hearability please contact Colin Beacher on 01903 237732.

The advantages to patients are:

1. The service is localised and convenient. No travelling to the Audiology Dept.
2. A full hearing examination is undertaken by qualified hearing aid dispenser with a full audiogram provided for the GP.
3. The hearing test is completely free
4. Patients are provided an informed choice.

"We only hear..." (cont. from cover)

Typical indications are difficulties listening in noise, understanding and following verbal instructions and poor auditory memory. The majority of the research to date has been focused around children where it is believed the condition is most prevalent. Whilst the research is in its very early stages and far from anything conclusive but early indications suggest there may be a link between 'glue ear', APD and the diagnosis of Dyslexia.

Hearing what you want to hear

Without question the brain learns to ignore sounds it is not interested in despite the ears being able to pick up the sound. Someone living by a railway line for instance is a prime example. Over a period of time the brain chooses to ignore the sounds of the trains and in contrast how often do you find yourself in a busy place yet still able to overhear your name being mentioned. The fact is the brain learns what is called 'Selective hearing' – it learns to disregard the sounds the mind is not interested in.

Learning to hear again

During the progression of hearing loss, the brain loses its ability to be 'Selective'. So when hearing is restored with the aid of hearing instruments the brain has to relearn how to interpret the restored sounds. In the early days of using hearing instruments the discovery of sound again can be quite disorientating but it is essential the user perseveres to restore 'Selective hearing'. The medical term for this period of time is called 'Rehabilitation' and it may require more than one return visit to the hearing aid dispenser to 'tweak' and gradually readjust the instruments to one's personal expectation and lifestyle. Indeed the more sophisticated hearing instruments have 'Data Logging' – this is where the instrument records the sounds and environments it has been subject to and how long the instrument has been in use.

This aftercare should be included in the purchase price of instruments from a qualified hearing aid dispenser and should be limitless.

Presbycusis – the most common form of hearing loss explained

The latest statistics from the RNID show that 41.7% of over 50-year olds will have some kind of hearing loss, the most common form being Presbycusis.

Presbycusis is a progressive sensorineural hearing loss that occurs in older people as they age. Sensorineural hearing loss is most often due to a loss of hair cells (sensory receptors in the inner ear). This can occur as a result of hereditary factors as well as aging, various health conditions, and side effects of some medicines. It can range from bothersome to severely disabling in its effects on the sufferer. Over 70% of adults over 70 will have some form of hearing loss and of these more than a third will have at least a moderate loss.

In moderate to severe cases it can cause the older person to become isolated, depressed and may significantly worsen age-related disability/cognitive impairment and dementia.

The loss associated with Presbycusis is usually greater for high-pitched sounds. For example, it may be difficult for someone to hear the nearby chirping of a bird or the ringing of a telephone. However, the same person may be able to hear clearly the low-pitched sound of a truck rumbling down the street.

There are many causes of presbycusis. Most commonly it arises from changes in the inner ear of a person as he or she

ages, but presbycusis can also result from changes in the middle ear or from complex changes along the nerve pathways leading to the brain. Presbycusis most often occurs in both ears, affecting them equally. Because the process of loss is generally gradual, people who have Presbycusis may not realise that their hearing is diminishing.

What are the symptoms of Presbycusis?

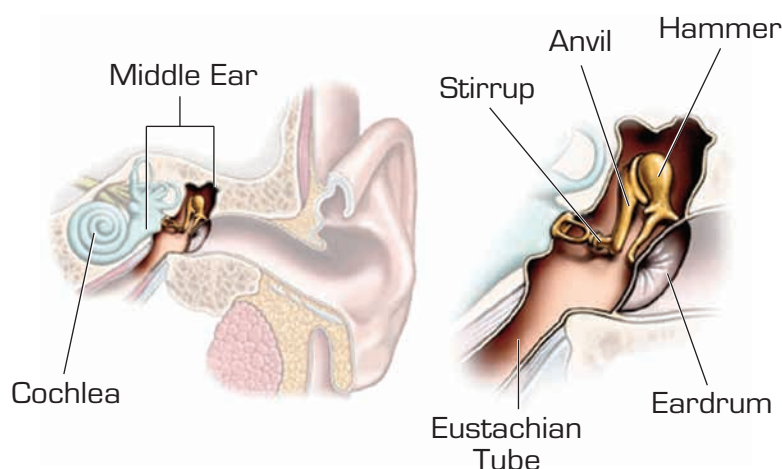
With Presbycusis, sounds often seem less clear and lower in volume. This contributes to difficulty hearing and understanding speech. Individuals with presbycusis may experience several of the following:

- The speech of others seems mumbled or slurred.
- High-pitched sounds such as "s" and "th" are difficult to hear and tell apart.
- Conversations are difficult to understand, especially when there is background noise.
- A man's voice is easier to hear than the higher pitches of a woman's voice.
- Certain sounds seem annoying or overly loud.
- Tinnitus (a ringing, roaring, or hissing sound in one or both ears) may also occur.

What can be done?

The condition is not curable or reversible but is correctable with the aid of hearing instruments and rehabilitative measures, (avoiding and protecting against loud noises) that can improve quality of life for the older patient.

An audiologist can conduct a complete hearing evaluation and determine if a hearing aid may be useful. The individual is counselled about how a hearing aid may improve listening situations. Then the audiologist will conduct tests to find an appropriate aid, selecting one that maximises a person's hearing and understanding of speech. Most older adults with hearing loss will benefit from assistance, although the degree of benefit may vary according to the type and amount of hearing loss.



be by ReSound

**It's not about getting old.
It's about staying young.**

These days it's pretty common for people to spend a lot of time (and money) on trying to stay young. What's strange is that most people's efforts tend to revolve exclusively around their looks and inner vitality, completely disregarding one of the most common and easily correctable signs of ageing: hearing loss.

This reluctance comes from a popularly held belief that contemplating any form of hearing correction would be to admit to a sign of ageing. Which is why **ReSound™** created an entirely new type of hearing instrument that's not about getting old, but staying young. Designed to never be seen, **be by ReSound™** is invisible when worn and boasts incredible sound performance.

A design classic!

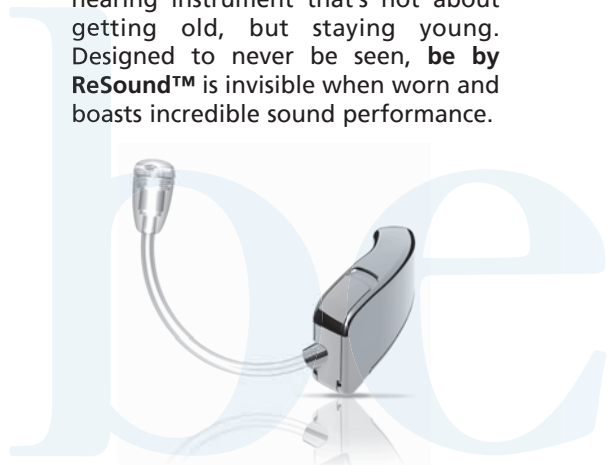
be by ReSound™ is the first product in an entirely new category of hearing instrumentation they call Invisible Open Technology (IOT™). As a result, **be by ReSound™** looks like no other hearing instrument, is worn like no other hearing instrument and literally disappears when in the ear. It delivers impressive sound performance too.

be by ReSound™ is a truly reinvigorating treatment. In just one simple dose, it returns youth and vitality to your hearing.

Wear and forget.

It's not just in the looks department where **be** is unique. Thanks to its innovative shape and ergonomic styling, **be** feels like no other hearing instrument. In fact, it's entirely likely you'll forget you're wearing it. A completely new type of shape, **be** sits naturally and invisibly in the ear, resulting in wearability that's second to none.

For more information about **be by ReSound™**, or to experience it for yourself, contact your hearing care professional today.



ReSound

rediscover hearing

www.bebyresound.com

Inteo™ from Widex

Inteo - Makes the world revolve around you with a true freedom of choice

The revolutionary new technology inside Inteo is designed to make the world fit your hearing requirements rather than the other way around, bringing you the sounds you want and need.

With its cutting-edge Dynamic Integrator, Inteo is the first hearing aid that constantly takes your personal preferences into account when creating the ideal listening environment for you.

Once the Dynamic Integrator has been programmed with your preferences, this information is used to tailor all aspects of the integrated signal processing within the hearing aid. From the analysis and processing of the sounds around you, to the constant optimisation of the hearing aid's performance – the Dynamic Integrator ensures that your preferences are always the determining factor.

We all rely on communication, be it with relatives, friends or colleagues. With Inteo's High definition locator effortless communication is no longer restricted to one-to-one conversations with the person in front of you. Inteo is the only hearing aid in the world that detects voice in your surroundings and provides unprecedented speech understanding, regardless of the location of the person



talking to you. There's no need to look for the voice – thanks to Inteo, the voices come looking for you.

Hear and understand the world around you – regardless of the listening situation.

Plus the Sound Diary feature within Inteo records data from the different sound environments that you experience during your day, helping to make additional tailoring much easier. And with the new, optional remote control you can even take "snapshots" of specific listening situations that may require special adjustments.

Inteo also features an Audibility Extender which does for hearing what night vision goggles do for sight. It detects the otherwise inaudible sounds and transposes them to fit your individual hearing abilities- the cymbals in a jazz band or the rustling of leaves for example. Inteo allows you to hear every detail.

With Inteo your choice of hearing aid can be based on personal preference rather than technological limitations. This is true freedom of choice!



NHS OR PRIVATE HEARING CARE?

If you suffer some hearing loss your doctor may refer you to the NHS audiology unit usually at a hospital within the Ear, Nose and Throat department. Waiting times vary greatly around the country and maybe up to 2 years. Alternatively you can opt to have your hearing assessed by a private hearing aid dispenser which in the case of Hearability will be within two weeks. The test can be arranged at any of the GP surgeries where Hearability has a hearing practice or at your own home – either way the test is completely free.

But what are the main differences if you decide to pay privately for your hearing care?

Apart from the free hearing examination within a maximum of two weeks there are two principle advantages to investing privately for your hearing care through Hearability.

Firstly you have the option of a range of hearing instruments with more advanced technology and features than available through the NHS meaning your instrument can be tailored to suit your personal lifestyle. In addition, aids in the private sector can be very small, discrete and aesthetically pleasing.

Secondly at Hearability we provide unlimited aftercare which is all inclusive in the cost of the hearing aid/s. Aftercare is essential to ensure your aid/s are meeting your lifestyle requirements and these can be replaced for an alternative model if necessary. This is in addition to a 30 day money back guarantee and up to 5 years full manufacturers' warranty.



Advice from the R.N.I.D website:

In the NHS, you cannot choose the style of hearing aid you want.

Hospitals should offer you a hearing aid for each ear if you would benefit, although policy about this varies. Some people prefer to buy hearing aids privately so that they can choose the style they want. Some types of hearing aid - such as aids that fit entirely in the ear - are not available on the NHS.

Buying a hearing aid

Ask your GP or a friend if they can recommend a private hearing aid dispenser. By law, all hearing aid dispensers must be qualified - or in supervised training - and registered with the Hearing Aid Council. This regulates dispensers' training and conduct, and handles complaints.

You will have your hearing tested and your hearing aid dispenser will show you how to use and look after your aid. But you also have to sign a contract agreeing to buy your hearing aid. Make sure you read the terms and conditions of this contract and find out about any money-back guarantee before you sign anything. Ideally, you should get at least 28 days to try out the hearing aid and be able to return it during this time if you are not satisfied with it, and get a refund.

How long will I have to wait if I buy privately?

Your hearing aid dispenser will probably see you within a week and you will be able to get your hearing aid within about two weeks.

Celebrate life - Don't suffer in silence

All your hearing care needs from one company with no hidden costs.

- ✓ FREE HEARING EXAMINATION
- ✓ HEARING AID PRESCRIPTION
- ✓ WIDE RANGE OF DIGITAL AIDS
- ✓ 30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
- ✓ 6 MONTHS FREE BATTERIES
- ✓ HEARING AID CLEANING / SERVICING
- ✓ HEARING AID REPAIRS
- ✓ HEARING AID BATTERIES
- ✓ EAR MOULDS
- ✓ HEARING PROTECTION
- ✓ REHABILITATION & COUNSELLING
- ✓ INDUSTRIAL SCREENING
- ✓ SPECIALIST HOME CARE SERVICE
- ✓ GP LIAISON
- ✓ COMPLIMENTARY AFTER CARE SERVICE

At Hearability your hearing is examined and professionally assessed by a qualified Hearing Aid Audiologist using the best equipment.

For information or to book a **FREE** hearing examination contact:

Anthony Goldsmith MSHAA BA (Health) RHAD, RGN, RMN, PGCEA, RNT
Hearing Aid Audiologist & Nurse

agoldsmith.hearability@ntlworld.com, www.hearability.co.uk

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Independent

Caring

Professional

All hearing aid dispensers are required to be registered with the Hearing Aid Council