

Change in hearing care provider

Why do I need to change my provider?

Our Hearing and Balance service has been commissioned by East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (EBCCG) since 2013 to provide your hearing care under the Any Qualified Provider (AQP) contract for non-complex adult hearing service provision for people aged 55 and over.

We were one of three providers, alongside Specsavers Hear Care Group Ltd and Sussex Health Care Audiology Ltd, offering this service for people who were experiencing age related (non-complex) hearing and communication difficulties and may benefit from a hearing assessment, rehabilitation and/or trying hearing aids with ongoing aftercare and support.

Last year, EBCCG went out to a tender process for this AQP service provision. We made a decision to withdraw from this service and to concentrate on providing specialist diagnostic and rehabilitation services for patients of all ages with hearing, tinnitus and balance problems across East Berkshire who do not meet AQP criteria or have complex needs.

What does this change mean?

We are working closely with both EBCCG and the new providers to make sure there is safe transfer of your care to an alternative provider, who will provide you with free NHS hearing care as we have done over the years for you.

Specsavers Hear Care Group Ltd, Sussex Health Care Audiology Ltd and four 'new' providers have been awarded the AQP service provision contract by EBCCG.

In helping with the safe transition of care, we have been contacting all our patients who were receiving care from us under the AQP process, informing them of the change and asking them to select one of the following new providers:

Specsavers Opticians and Audiologists **Phone:** 0800 077 8692

- 18 Princess Square, Bracknell RG12 1LS
- 85 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JX
- 194-196 High Street, Slough SL1 1JS
- 59 Peascod Street, Windsor SL4 1DE

Sussex Healthcare **Phone:** 0800 622 6282

- Sandhurst Group Practice, 72 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst GU47 9BT

Scrivens Opticians and Hearing Care **Phone:** 0800 626 427

- 79 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JX
- 20-24 The Parade, Bourne End SL8 5SY

The Outside Clinic (At-home service) **Phone:** 0800 954 9093

Frequently asked questions



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Do I need to go to my GP to be seen by my chosen provider?

No. Depending on the letter you have received from us, you have been asked to either contact your chosen provider directly or to return your choice to us by completing the slip at the bottom of your letter.

Will I still receive free NHS hearing care from the new providers?

Yes all the new providers who have been commissioned by EBCCG under the new contract are required to provide you with free NHS hearing care.

Will I get the same quality of service from the new providers?

Yes – they will continue to provide the high quality care to national standards - United Kingdom Accreditation Standards (UKAS) through obtaining Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS) accreditation, which is a best practice certification.

Do the new providers offer home visits?

Most providers offer a variety of consulting options. However, we would advise that you directly discuss your personal needs with your new provider so that they can be met as best they can.

Are the new providers allowed to sell me private hearing aids?

It is a requirement that providers clearly separate their NHS and private consultations. Providers who also have a private hearing aids service are NOT allowed to promote their own private products in an NHS appointment. They must set up a separate consultation to discuss their private non-NHS business.

Can I still get batteries, accessories and maintenance from Berkshire Hearing and Balance services?

No, as we are no longer commissioned to provide your hearing care, you will need to contact your chosen hearing care provider to obtain on-going hearing aid aftercare. They will give you information on how to access these services from them.

Will my new provider have drop in repair clinics?

Each provider will operate in a variety of ways to provide hearing care support services. You will need to contact them directly for information on how to access their aftercare support.

What happens if I am not happy with my new provider?

When you are referred for a particular service, you should be able to choose from a list of qualified providers who meet NHS service quality requirements, prices and normal contractual obligations. Therefore, if you are not happy with the service you receive from your chosen provider you should contact their complaints department in the first instance. If you decide you want to change your provider, then please contact your GP and ask to be referred to an alternative provider.

Will I still get a hearing test every three years?

Please contact your new provider who will be able to guide you on the best course of action.

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Where can I complain about this change?

We value feedback from patients and their families, taking concerns and complaints very seriously. We hope that this frequently asked questions sheet has addressed your concerns to your satisfaction. If this is not the case, please write to our complaints office at:

Berkshire Healthcare, Fitzwilliam House, 3rd Floor, Skimped Hill Lane, Bracknell, RG12 1BQ

Tel: 01344 415600

Fax: 01344 415627

E-mail: bhct.complaints@berkshire.NHS.uk

Alternatively you can also contact East Berkshire CCG complaints team on:

SCWCSU PALS, King Edward VII Hospital, St Leonards Road, Windsor SL4 3DP

Tel: 0300 123 6258.

E-mail: scwcsu.palscomplaints@nhs.net