

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 7254

Please reply to:
FOI Administrator
Trust Management
Maidstone Hospital
Hermitage Lane
Maidstone, Kent
ME16 9QQ
Email: mtw-tr.foiadmin@nhs.net
www.mtw.nhs.uk

23 March 2022

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Audiology Services.

You asked:

Section 1: Your service

1.1 Please answer the questions below based on the situation as of July 2021.

1.2 Please give the name of your audiology service/s. If you provide services on behalf of another Trust/s please provide details of all the Trusts that you provide services for below. Please write names in full and expand acronyms:

Section 2: Your caseload of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people

2.1 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging people with intellectual disabilities who use the service?

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

2.2 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging autistic

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

Please include the following information for your service. We understand that you may not record all these numbers. Please only fill in the numbers your service records or provide an estimate if possible (noting with an E). If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state 'not recorded':

Section 3: Transition to adult services

3.1 How do you prepare young people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic young people for transition to adult services? Please select all that apply.

Section 4: Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments: According to The Equality Act 2010, service providers should make 'reasonable adjustments' to their provision, to allow disabled people to access the same services as non-disabled people. These adjustments will be different for different services. What is reasonable for one provider may not be possible or relevant for another provider.

4.1 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate accessibility to audiology services? Select all that apply:

4.2 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate appointment flexibility? Select all that apply:

4.3 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to testing procedures? Select all that apply:

4.4 What attempts are made to find out what the individual's needs are prior to the appointment (e.g., communication, physical, behavioural needs)?

4.5 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate communication? Select all that apply:

4.6 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to providing patient information? Select all that apply:

4.7 Do you currently provide a choice of coloured moulds to people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people at no extra charge? Please select one answer:

4.8 Does your service offer any of the following adaptations people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

Section 5: Wax management

5.1 How is problematic wax managed in people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in your service? Select all that apply:

Section 6: Specialist Services

Specialist Services: By specialist services, we mean audiological services which are provided separately from your mainstream provision, specialised for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people. This might mean an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting.

6.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were seen by a specialist service as opposed to your mainstream service

6.2 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, what review processes were available (please select all that apply)?

6.3 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were offered the following services (please give a number for all that apply).

Section 7: Meeting Relevant Guidance

7.1 How closely do you work to the following relevant guidance?

Section 8: Your policies

8.1 What documentation do you currently have specific to people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people? Select all that apply and indicate whether 'in place' or 'in progress'. These documents may be trust/hospital-specific or may be specific to your department/service.

8.2 Do you carry out the following risk assessments? Select all that apply:

8.3 How does your 'Did Not Attend' policy differ for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people to that of the wider patient population?

Section 9: Referral Routes

9.1 Of the new referrals of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people, that you received between 1st May and 31st July 2021, where did the referrals originate from? Please select all that apply.

Section 10: Multidisciplinary Working

10.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply and indicate estimate of frequency of referral.

10.2 Of the autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply

10.3 Do you have access to any of the following? Select all that apply:

Section 11: Staffing and Training

11.1 Are the staff (e.g., audiologists, receptionists) in your service able to access the CPD necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

11.1b If CPD is not available for all staff in your service, necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, please indicate why not (select all that apply):

11.2 If you offer a specialist service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, how many full-time equivalent staff were routinely involved on 31st July 2021? (Please select all that apply).

11.3 What training have the staff in your service been offered for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? (Please select all that apply)

Section 12: Patient engagement and service evaluation

Please answer the questions in this section based on the situation as of 31st July 2021.

12.1 What patient feedback mechanisms do you have in place for services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

a. What have been the most recent outcomes of patient feedback regarding services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

12.2 Do you audit/evaluate your service practices for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? Please give a brief explanation (1 or 2 sentences).

12.3 Are there any aspects of service delivery that you adapted during the Coronavirus pandemic, which you intend to retain beyond the end of restrictions (e.g., tele-audiology, telephone reviews)? Please give brief details and an explanation of why.

12.6 Are there plans to develop your service for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people in the near future? Please give a brief description of any planned changes.

Trust response:

Section 1: Your service

Please answer the questions below based on the situation as of July 2021.

Your role:	HEAD OF AUDIOLOGY
------------	-------------------

Section 2: Your caseload of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people

2.1 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging people with intellectual disabilities who use the service?

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

All information we receive comes from information received from a GP referral letter.

2.2 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging autistic people who use the service?

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

All information we receive comes from information received from a GP referral letter.

Please include the following information for your service. **We understand that you may not record all these numbers.** Please only fill in the numbers your service records or provide an estimate if possible (noting with an E). If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state 'not recorded':

Total population of the area that your service covers	Not recorded
The geographical boundaries your service covers	Not recorded
Age group your service covers (e.g., 0 – 18 years, 18+ years)	18 + years
Total number of adults with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1 st May and 31 st July 2021.	Not recorded
Total number of children (<18 years) with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1 st May and 31 st July 2021.	Not recorded
Total number of autistic adults who were seen between 1 st May and 31 st July 2021.	Not recorded
Total number of autistic children (<18 years) who were seen between 1 st May and 31 st July 2021.	Not recorded

Section 3: Transition to adult services

3.1 How do you prepare young people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic young people for transition to adult services? Please select all that apply.

Professional liaison arranged between adult and paediatric services prior to transition	YES
---	-----

Section 4: Reasonable Adjustments

4.1 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate accessibility to audiology services? Select all that apply:

	For anyone who needs them
Test room of sufficient size to accommodate client, up to 2 carers and up to 2 testers	X
Wheelchair access	X

4.2 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate appointment flexibility? Select all that apply:

	For anyone who needs them
Longer appointment times	X
Option of different times	X
Saturday appointments	X

4.3 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to testing procedures? Select all that apply:

Soundfield behavioural testing in addition to ear-specific testing	X
--	---

4.4 What attempts are made to find out what the individual's needs are prior to the appointment (e.g., communication, physical, behavioural needs)?

Check referral letter	X
-----------------------	---

Check hospital records	X
Contact patient	X

- 4.5 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate communication? Select all that apply:

Ability to book communication support professionals where necessary (e.g., interpreters, speech-to-text reporters, lipspeakers)	X
Easy read versions of patient letters and reports of findings	X

- 4.6 Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to providing patient information? Select all that apply:

Easy read patient information	X
Pictorial resources explaining processes in clinic e.g., audiometry	X
Video information about the department, staff and appointment	X

- 4.7 Do you currently provide a choice of coloured moulds to people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people at no extra charge? Please select one answer:
Yes, with limitations – please specify:

Yes, This is available and it left up to the audiologist to offer it.

- 4.8 Does your service offer any of the following adaptations people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

	For anyone who needs them
Hearing aid fittings with 2 members of staff	X
Training for carers and families on hearing aid use	X
Easy read information on hearing aid use	X

Section 5: Wax management

- 5.1 How is problematic wax managed in people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in your service? Select all that apply:

Referral to GP surgery	X
------------------------	---

Section 6: Specialist Services

- 6.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were seen by a specialist service as opposed to your mainstream service (please give a number for all that apply)?

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
Specialist audiology service for people with complex needs	Not recorded	Not recorded
Mainstream audiology services	Not recorded	Not recorded
Mixture of mainstream and specialist service	Not recorded	Not recorded

- 6.2 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, what review processes were available (please select all that apply)?

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
Normal hearing – discharge, self-referral to return	Not recorded	Not recorded
Normal hearing – routine review	Not recorded	Not recorded
Hearing Loss – same review as mainstream service	Not recorded	Not recorded
Hearing Loss – additional review appointments	Not recorded	Not recorded

- 6.3 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were offered the following services (please give a number for all that apply).

	For people with intellectual disabilities	For autistic people
--	---	---------------------

Hearing Therapy	Not recorded	Not recorded
Vestibular assessment or rehabilitation	Not recorded	Not recorded
ENT	Not recorded	Not recorded
Cochlear Implant Services	Not recorded	Not recorded
Tinnitus assessment or rehabilitation	Not recorded	Not recorded
Sensory teams	Not recorded	Not recorded
Other Implantable Devices	Not recorded	Not recorded

Section 7: Meeting Relevant Guidance

7.1 How closely do you work to the following relevant guidance?

	Awareness
Learning Disabilities Improvement Standards for NHS Trusts https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2926/v1.17_Improvement_Standards_added_note.pdf	X
PMLD Service Standards: http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/PMLD-service-standards	X
The Accessible Information Standard https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/	X
British Society of Audiology Practice Guidance for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities https://www.thebsa.org.uk/resources/access-to-audiology-services-for-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities/	X

Section 8: Your policies

8.1 What documentation do you currently have specific to people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people? Select all that apply and indicate whether 'in place' or 'in progress'. These documents may be trust/hospital-specific or may be specific to your department/service.

	In progress
Patient Pathway(s)	X
Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with people with intellectual disabilities	X
Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with autistic people	X
Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with people with intellectual disabilities	X
Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with autistic people	X
Risk Assessments (detail in question 9.2)	X
Transition SOPs or policy	X

8.2 Do you carry out the following risk assessments? Select all that apply:

Other, please specify:

Informally within an appointment, where another appointment can be offered or further support.

8.3 How does your 'Did Not Attend' policy differ for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people to that of the wider patient population?

Patients are offered another appointment.

Section 9: Referral Routes

9.1 Of the new referrals of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people, that you received between 1st May and 31st July 2021, where did the referrals originate from? Please select all that apply.

GP	x
ENT	x

Section 10: Multidisciplinary Working

10.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply and indicate estimate of frequency of referral.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Speech and Language Therapy	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Community Learning Disabilities Team	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Teacher of the Deaf	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Ear, Nose and Throat	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Occupational Therapy	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Other	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

10.2 Of the autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Speech and Language Therapy	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Community Learning Disabilities Team	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Teacher of the Deaf	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Ear, Nose and Throat	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Occupational Therapy	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Other	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded

10.3 Do you have access to any of the following? Select all that apply: Not applicable

Section 11: Staffing and Training

11.1 Are the staff (e.g., audiologists, receptionists) in your service able to access the CPD necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

Other: please specify

this is available on the intranet for all staff.

11.2 If you offer a specialist service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, how many full-time equivalent staff were routinely involved on 31st July 2021? (Please select all that apply). Specialist provision can include an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting. Please express part-time roles as a fraction of a full-time role e.g., 1 full-time role and a part-time role of 3 days would be 1.6 FTE. – Not applicable

11.3 What training have the staff in your service been offered for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? (Please select all that apply)

	Clinical staff working in a specialist audiology service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people	Clinical staff who work with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in a mainstream audiology service	Non-clinical staff who work in the audiology service (e.g., receptionist, porter)
Mental Capacity Act training	x	x	x
Learning Disability Awareness	x	x	x
Autism Awareness	x	x	x

Section 12: Patient engagement and service evaluation

Please answer the questions in this section based on the situation as of 31st July 2021.

12.1 What patient feedback mechanisms do you have in place for services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

Questionnaire includes option to record own comments / email

What have been the most recent outcomes of patient feedback regarding services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

Not applicable

12.2 Do you audit/evaluate your service practices for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? Please give a brief explanation (1 or 2 sentences).

No (please specify why)	It is difficult to identify these patients.
-------------------------	---

12.3 Are there any aspects of service delivery that you adapted during the Coronavirus pandemic, which you intend to retain beyond the end of restrictions (e.g., tele-audiology, telephone reviews)? Please give brief details and an explanation of why.

Yes, some remote hearing aid fittings. This was done over the phone, with the addition of multiple telephone follow-ups when required.

12.6 Are there plans to develop your service for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people in the near future? Please give a brief description of any planned changes.

We plan to look closer at patients that have an intellectual disability and are autistic to see if we can adapt our services to meet their need. Re-look at the SOP involved with this group of patients to see if we can improve on this.
Attending of the Trust AIS meetings to see how we can implement more into this area.