

Summer 2010
Issue 1

Sound advice



Some hearing aids through the years

Welcome from all at Forth Valley Audiology. Please enjoy the first edition of our all new newsletter. Our aim is to keep you informed and add some insight into what goes on behind the doors in your local Audiology Service. If you have any comments/suggestions email: donald.macaskill@nhs.net or write to address above.

www.nhsforthvalley.com/audiology

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What is Audiology?

Audiology is a challenging and expanding field of clinical science and technology, involving the study of hearing and balance. As a health-care profession, audiology also involves assessment, management and therapeutic rehabilitation of people with hearing and balance problems and associated disorders. This includes patients of all ages from newborns and children through to working adults and the elderly.

A little about us!

We presently have departments at Falkirk and Stirling Royal Infirmarys as well as satellite clinics at Clackmannanshire Community Hospital and The Forth Valley Sensory centre in Camelon. The Audiology Manager is Dr Donald MacAskill and the Deputy Manager is Mrs Jennifer Nicol, we have a further 2 chief audiologists, 6 specialist audiologists, 4 senior assistants, 1 trainee associate audiologist, 1 assistant technical officer and our paediatric service has a community paediatrician. We are a training centre for BSc and GDip Audiology students from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh as well as an accredited centre for training Clinical Scientists.

- Congratulations to Stephanie who graduated in May with a Post- Graduate certificate in Leadership and Management from De Montfort University.
- She has since obtained the post of Healthcare Scientist lead for Forth Valley and Lanarkshire and we wish her well.



Following the opening of the Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert, we would like to emphasise that Audiology remains at Falkirk Royal Infirmary at present. Repairs continue on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 1 till 4pm and appointments will continue at this time. Tel: 01786434171 Email: FV-UHB.Audiology@nhs.net

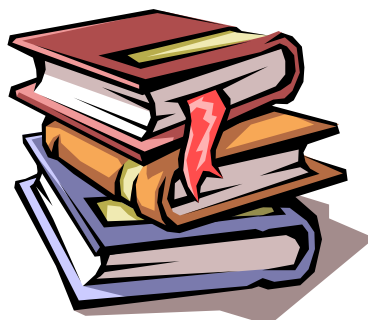
Audiology Volunteers



As a result of successful pilot schemes carried out in other departments and a recognition of the benefits that volunteers can bring to patients with hearing difficulties, Forth Valley Audiology department is working with Mr Stan Sanderson from Community

Service Volunteers (RSVP) to create a group of Audiology volunteers. The hope is that we can create some open clinics where people can come and get basic re-tubing, cleaning and advice about their hearing aid(s) or hearing. We hope in time to have people

who will reduce waits at repairs, visit those who have difficulty attending clinics as well as holding open sessions at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre. Training has only just begun but we have an enthusiastic group and will keep you informed of our progress.



Ongoing learning

Ongoing learning and knowledge sharing is at the heart of the department. It allows us to keep abreast of new technology, which in turn benefits staff and our patients. Recent examples of this are shown below

Edward and Louise are currently enrolled on the Queen Margaret University/NES HND in Hearing Aid Audiology. Having passed their written exams for year one, they will undertake their practical exams at the end of August. We wish them luck.

Sandy has completed year one of his MSC Audiology through Bristol University with very good results. This is a very intense course and requires a great deal of self research and study. We know he can do it. Linda attended a two day Audiology receptionist course in July. Agnes and Elizabeth attended a three day course at Queen Margaret University .

Departmental events

In May and June, we organised our 15th and 16th Scottish Study days (in 5 years) with the focus on rehabilitation of hearing impaired adults and electrophysiology. Our study days have involved national and internationally renowned audiology professionals from Sydney, Texas, Cambridge, Manchester, Florida, and Tennessee.

We had in house training on deaf/blindness, new hearing aid software and we were involved in the development of three different pieces of Audiology equipment. As a department known for our innovation and early implementation of new equipment, companies often ask us to look at new developments. We are happy to do so if we feel it may

NHS Forth Valley are committed to achieving the governments referral to treatment target of 18 weeks for audiology by Dec. 2011.

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Troubleshooting

Using hearing aids with telephones

It's quite common that people remove their hearing aids in order to hear on the phone.

There are a couple of things to try. Hold the receiver over the microphone of the hearing aid for a clearer signal. Avoid cordless phones as they often have weaker amplification than corded phones. Find out if your

phone has a telecoil function (loop system). If so, pressing your program button to telecoil on your hearing aid could help. Recent developments with hearing aids allow a small magnet to be placed on the telephone and this can automatically change the aid to hear the telephone better. This is

sometimes known as autophone. The most recently developed hearing aids can allow the hearing aids to be connected to the users mobile phone through Bluetooth streaming. This is unlikely to be available to the NHS for a few years, but when we get it, we will let you know.



NHS hearing aids and In the Ear hearing aids

Since April 2005, nearly every hearing aid fitted by NHS Forth Valley has been a digital one. There is often some confusion about what this means. People often confuse digital with the In The Ear hearing aids (ITE). This can sometimes lead to disappointment when we explain that we do not routinely fit these aids on the NHS. The question asked is why do the

NHS not provide these aids routinely. There are two main reasons for this; inevitably cost is reason number one. In Forth Valley we fit close to 6000 hearing aids a year. For the cost of a basic ITE we can purchase two or three (dependent on model) of our higher specification Behind The Ear (BTE) aids. The other less obvious one is that if an NHS

hearing aid breaks down and needs repaired, we can usually replace this aid at a repair session; with an ITE aid, it needs to get sent away for repair leaving the patient without an aid until it returns. For interest though a few years ago, 90% of hearing aids purchased in the USA were ITE aids. With the introduction of

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NHS hearing aids and In the Ear hearing aids Cont.d

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of smaller BTE slim tube and receiver in the canal aids, this percentage changed and in the past two years more BTE aids have been purchased in eth USA than ITEs. The reasons are many, but the comfort of a less occluded ear (no earmould) and more natural hearing are very important ones. Forth Valley started fitting these types of aids in 2006 and we have contin-

ued fitting them. A patient coming for a first assessment of their hearing can often be offered a hearing aid and have it fitted at the same appointment. This is beneficial to the patient in terms of reducing the number of appointments and beneficial to the department in freeing up appointments for other patients. We have been fitting the

most recent of these aids (the i-fit) since September 2009. They have a loop system, up to 3 programs, a volume control, very good feedback control and can learn from the patients own adjustments to become more personal. In time we hope to look at an ITE alternative that will be replaceable and cheap.

Getting to know:

Stephanie Doody, Specialist Audiologist

"We've had to keep adapting to new technology, learning more IT skills than ever before"

I entered Audiology as a student in 1993. I married Glasgow based Chief Audiologist Paul Doody in 1997 and I moved to Forth Valley in October 2005.

I have worked in adult Audiology for 17 years and have seen a lot of changes in that time, from large basic body worn amplifiers to our new slim fit open digital aids. We've had to keep adapting to new technology, learning more IT

skills than ever before. Audiology has modernized so much with more emphasis on rehabilitation and patient choice matters too.

I made the decision to start formal studies again 2 years ago and the frontline leadership and management post-graduate certificate seemed a good place to start.

I found the course initially very daunting

but interesting and challenging. I have used my studies to look at improvements which can be made to the Audiology service, have learned a lot about myself and made lots of new friends.

I have more confidence in my abilities and hopefully this is beneficial to the team, patients and families as well as myself.

Next edition, what to expect at an audiology assessment, more trouble shooting,

