

# A GUIDE TO BUYING HEARING AIDS IN THE UK - 2020

---

By Crystal Hearing Limited

Making buying hearing aids clear and transparent

**CRYSTAL**  
**HEARING**  
Hearing Care Solutions



# The Minefield

***'It is such a minefield!!!'*** ...is one of the most frequent and exasperated complaints that we hear from people looking to buy hearing aids.

The internet has allowed people to research hearing aids in far more detail than before – but there is so much information being presented by both hearing aid manufacturers and hearing aid retailers that most people quickly become confused, and possibly put off buying hearing aids. The information can be contradicting, outdated, or biased.

Hearing aid manufacturers will naturally laud their own products as being the best; some hearing aid retailers (i.e. Amplifon, Hidden Hearing) are tied to certain hearing aid manufacturers and will have a bias towards those brands; and many independents may be heavily swayed to certain manufacturers who offer them better discounts.

On top of this, some retailers sell outdated hearing aid models (often seen at Boots Hearing Care) and some sell rebranded hearing aids which may be lower specification than current 'branded' models (often seen at Specsavers). It is no wonder that consumers can be skeptical and confused.

## **Does this all sound familiar?**

This guide is presented to help you through this minefield and ultimately help you to get the best (and latest release) hearing aids and the best hearing care provider for your needs whilst guiding you also on pricing.

## **Here is your guide to buying hearing aids in the UK**

## CONTENTS

1. An introduction to the UK hearing aid market .....	3
2. Choosing a hearing care provider .....	5
3. Setting up an appointment.....	9
4. Choosing your hearing aids .....	10
5. Pricing.....	14
6. Grants for hearing aids .....	15
7. Fitting and aftercare.....	17
8. End Note.....	20
9. A word or warning.....	21

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE UK HEARING AID MARKET

Firstly, you do not necessarily have to 'buy' your hearing aids – the NHS supply FREE hearing aids to those who need them, and you should not rule out trying them.

It is, however, important to understand the many differences between what you can get via the NHS and what you can buy privately – [more on this here](#).

Advanced digital hearing aids are developed and manufactured by many key leading brands, and a few lesser known brands.

## The major brands are:

- Oticon
- Phonak
- Unitron
- ReSound
- Starkey
- Bernafon
- Widex
- Signia (formerly Siemens Hearing)

## The lesser brands are:

- Hansaton
- Audio Service
- Vogue (by Widex)

A few key notes:

**Oticon** and **Bernafon** are owned by the same holding group (Demant).

**Phonak** and **Unitron** are owned by the same holding group (Sonova).

**Signia** and **Audio Service** are owned by the same holding group (Sivantos).

**Widex** and **Sivantos** merged in March 2019 and act under the group name WS Audiology.

You can check out the latest hearing aids offered by these leading brands [here](#).

These companies do NOT supply hearing aids direct to the public.

Hearing aids can be bought via hearing aid retail outlets / businesses – this could be at a high street branch, or via a company offering a domiciliary service in the comfort of your own home.

Hearing aid retailers may be large national high street chains (i.e. Amplifon, Boots or Hidden Hearing), or medium sized high street chains (i.e. Scrivens or Leightons) or local independent businesses such as us, Crystal Hearing.

Hearing aid retailers employ ‘Hearing Aid Audiologists’, who must be registered with the **Health and Care Professions Council** in order to sell hearing aids.

[Check their register here](#)

#### **Who to choose from - Independents or National Chains?**

The **Which? Magazine** survey on buying hearing aids in the UK voted independent retailers as the best option.

**Local Independents came top in the WHICH? Magazine – ‘Buying a Hearing Aid’ survey**

Independent hearing care providers were given 5 stars across the board, with an overall customer score of 84%.

Independents were the only sector who scored 5 stars in all the rated categories ‘products and pricing’, ‘staff and service’, and ‘arrangements and facilities’

The major chains did not fare so high, with the highest rated at 5% lower than the independent sector.

Obviously though, there are ‘good’ and not so good’ hearing aid audiologists working in all areas of hearing aid retail and hopefully this guide will help you work out who is good, and who is best for your needs.

**The major chains did not rate as high as the independents**

You will need to subscribe to **Which? Magazine** to read the full [Which? Magazine article on buying hearing aids in the UK](#).

# Choosing a hearing care provider

The various aspects to consider when choosing a provider to supply your hearing aids are:

- Longevity of the business
- The Audiologist
- Competency – i.e. to program your hearing aids
- Reliability of communications
- Are they independent or tied to a hearing aid manufacturer?
- Prices

**Longevity** - You can check a company's date of incorporation via the [Companies House website](#). All businesses must start somewhere – but maybe consider an unbundled package if using a young business (see the benefits of doing this on page 7).

## *Crystal Hearing Limited was established in 2007*

**Audiologist** – It can be important to see the same Audiologist during set-up and for aftercare. National chains tend to get a higher turnaround of staff as they move around.

**Competency** - modern hearing aids are very sophisticated and are programmed using dedicated software which varies between each supplier – programming them can be a very technical process. Make sure you feel confident that your supplier has good technical understanding of how to program hearing aids for your needs.

**Communications** – we understand that prompt communications are required to keep your hearing aid downtime to a minimum. Do you want to be kept waiting in the dark? Don't put up with poor or slow customer attention.

From: [Richard Davis](#) >  
To: [Me John Lloyd](#) >

Hide 

### Re: Phonak TV Connector

Yesterday at 15:22

Hi John

Many thanks for your very quick response. I will place an order very shortly and email the form to you as well.

Thanks again.

Kind regards  
Richard

From: [Crystal Hearing](#)  
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2019 3:18 PM  
To: [Richard Davis](#)  
Subject: Re: Phonak TV Connector

From: [1297 Jon Bridger](#) >  
To: [Me John Lloyd](#) >

Hide 

### Re: Hearing aid problem

Yesterday at 13:20

John,

Thanks for the speedy response. Please can you email the letter to me and I will send it to Phonak directly.

Thanks

Jon

On Wednesday, March 6, 2019, Crystal Hearing <[info@crystalhearinguk.co.uk](mailto:info@crystalhearinguk.co.uk)> wrote:

**Independent** – It serves your best interest to have a choice of all the best hearing aids on the market, not just the brand (or two) that a company may be tied to. That said, some independents may also focus heavily on just one or two brands. Ask questions.

### *Crystal Hearing can supply 8 leading brands*

**Price** – Hearing aids are available at varying technology levels. Each manufacturer releases several price points – typically: entry level, lower-mid, upper-mid, top range.

Hearing aid prices can vary massively. Some variation may be justified due to location, premises, service provided, etc. – but be careful you are not paying too much for the same hearing aids that you could conveniently buy elsewhere with the same service.

On the flip-side, some companies simply try and undercut everyone else and that may affect their ability to maintain your aftercare needs. They may be a new business with no proven history setting prices low to try and make their business work - it may work, it may not.

It is important that you consider prices, but that you balance pricing with all other factors to ensure you get **the best hearing aids, at the right price, with the best service.**

*Crystal Hearing prices are all online - [HERE](#)*

## **Other considerations**

### **Online companies**

Some companies may advertise online as if they are a national company but they are a network of independent Audiologist. As mentioned above - check exactly who you are buying from. Crystal Hearing passes some online enquiries to other independents who we trust.

Some companies are selling hearing aids online with no initial set-up or aftercare. They may refer you to someone for fitting, or they may leave it to you to find someone. If they refer you then the same concerns herein should be satisfied; if you are left to find someone then you may come to a quick halt as Audiologists are likely to decline you.

### **Liquidated companies**

Several companies have liquidated over the years and the same names may appear to be attached to some of these companies. You can always check the history of business directors using the [Companies House website](#). Claritas (formerly UK Hearing Care) have recently gone into liquidation leaving many customers with no aftercare – [info here](#).

## Unbundled packages and prices

Hearing aids are typically sold with ongoing aftercare. Some companies will call you in to see them every 6 months, 8 months, or year etc., whilst others will serve your aftercare needs as and when you require them. Hearing loss on average may have a noticeable drop over a two year period and the hearing aids may need reprogramming.

Some companies are now offering unbundled packages, including Crystal Hearing, so that you can buy higher specification hearing aids at the outset (including proper set-up), and then pay for your aftercare as and when required. The benefits are:

- Lower initial outlay, and lower overall prices
- Higher specification hearing aids being within your initial affordability
- Freedom to move away from your supplier without financial loss
- Reduced financial risk if a company goes bust

## How do you know that a company will satisfy your concerns?

All companies offer a money-back-period, normally 30 or 60 days, and this can be extended upon agreement with your supplier if you are experiencing concerns.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some suppliers may charge a significant cancellation fee, so please do check the terms of sale before making payment. The details will normally be on the back of the sale form that you sign when making payment. Crystal Hearing charges just £50 cancellation fee to help cover minor costs.

## How to check in advance that you are choosing the right supplier?

# ONLINE REVIEWS

Check the company website – like ours hopefully they are all genuine.



**bruce murchie**

2 reviews

★★★★★ 2 years ago

I have been dealing with John Lloyd of Crystal Hearing for nearly five years and during that time I have found the service provided to be top quality and always without question in providing honest and accurate advise relating to hearing aids. I have no hesitation in recommending Crystal Hearing to any potential customer.

**Check Google 'Maps'** – Type in a general search (i.e. 'hearing aid providers') and see who comes up in your local area and check their Google reviews.

**Crystal Hearing has over 40 reviews on Google**

### Check Facebook reviews

Most businesses now have a Facebook business page and may have reviews listed in the Reviews tab

**Crystal Hearing has a 5/5 rating from 20 reviews on Facebook**

**Check dedicated Review websites** – i.e. Reviews.co.uk or Trustpilot.com



**CRYSTAL HEARING LTD**

"My mother and I have been with **crystal hearing** for four years and my brother has recently got his first aids. We are delighted with the fast professional service."

★★★★★

174 Reviews

**Crystal Hearing has over 200 reviews on [www.reviews.co.uk](http://www.reviews.co.uk)**

## Setting up an appointment

When considering such a high expense purchase you may wish to seek advice from two or even three hearing aid providers to reassure yourself on the above matters. Checking for reviews online first will hopefully help you find good local businesses.

Crystal Hearing can help you find local support if needed as we are part of a network of independent practices. Call us on 07957 465 084.

## What to expect from an initial hearing test / hearing aid consultation?

A full hearing consultation should last about an hour and involve, as a minimum:

- A detailed case history of all matters regarding your ears, previous hearing tests and any hearing aids previously used.
- Otoscopic examination of the ear – possibly with a videoscope
- A hearing test in accordance with professional standards. Proper explanation of the hearing test results, including how bad it is, the likely cause, the effects of the hearing loss, and what happens going forward (aided & unaided).
- It is wise to ensure upper loudness levels are always checked to ensure you do not suffer from hyper sensitivity to loud sounds – this test can often be overlooked by many Audiologists and could be detrimental to your hearing if the hearing aids are not set up correctly. Ensure your loudness levels are checked.
- Medical referral if required. Hearing Aid Audiologists are not medically qualified and should not give out medical advice (unless they have medical qualifications).
- A detailed discussion on the most appropriate current digital hearing aids and hearing aid accessories for your hearing loss and lifestyle requirements (unless medical referral is required first).

It is a good idea to attend a hearing consultation with your partner or a friend, as there is a lot to take in, and they can absorb some of the information to help you discuss things in your own time should you wish to do so before committing to a purchase.

Hearing tests are free at many places, but some companies may charge. A fair charge should be acceptable for a good professional service that gives you the appropriate advice on your way to getting the best results. **Hearing tests are free at Crystal Hearing.**

# Choosing Your Hearing Aids

## So many to choose from!

When you are in a position to buy some hearing aids you need to consider:

- Hearing aid style
- Hearing aid brand
- Hearing aid technology
- Hearing aid accessories
- Pricing

You should be clear on the merits of these points before buying your hearing aids

### Hearing Aids Styles

The picture below runs through the seven hearing aid styles most commonly available.

It is important to realise that some styles may not suit your hearing loss, and that some styles sacrifice technology for cosmetics.

The first step to choosing a hearing aid is to determine which style of hearing aid works for your hearing loss, and what style you are prepared to wear if cosmetics is a factor.

The smaller hearing aids sacrifice some of the most beneficial technology that the larger hearing aid styles can incorporate. A good Audiologist will explain what styles works for your hearing loss first and foremost – they should then make it clear what technology you may be sacrificing if choosing a more discreet style.

**Find out what hearing aid style suits your hearing loss, and choose what is most important to you - cosmetics or functionality?**

Hearing aid styles are explained in more detail [here](#).

## Hearing Aid Brands

As mentioned previously there are eight leading manufacturers to choose from, and a few less common brand names.

*Crystal Hearing can choose from 8 leading brands*

*We regularly fit 4 of those leading brands*

We are often asked – ‘*what is the best hearing aid?*’

Some brands are better than others in certain areas, but no single brand, or hearing aid, is better than all the others in all areas.

Hearing is subjective to each person and what works well for one person may not be the best option for another person – even if they have the same hearing loss. That said, some people won’t tell much difference between the various brands (dependent on technology level), and others greatly prefer the ‘sound’ of one brand regardless of technology benefits.

Our advice is to find an independent hearing aid specialist and get a feel for whether they are truly independent. You need to find a hearing care specialist who can demonstrate that they understand the benefits of the latest technology by each leading brand.

Do some online research and ask them some questions – can they explain the merits of various brands? Do they have demo hearing aids from various suppliers?

“**The best way to consider a hearing aid is by taking advantage of any free trial period offers**

Many high street national chains will clearly swing you to a certain brand and claim it is the best because they have a common interest in that brand. This could mean you miss out on a hearing aid that works best for you. We do not do this at Crystal Hearing.

## Hearing Aid Technology

The holy grail of digital hearing aids is to help people with hearing loss to **hear speech in background noise** – but, it is important to understand that if you suffer from nerve related hearing loss, such as presbycusis (age related hearing loss), that no matter how good hearing aid technology gets it cannot restore your hearing to what it used to be – [read why here.](#)

The best technology in hearing aids to assist with speech-in-noise requires dual-microphone technology – i.e. two microphones in each hearing aid. Dual microphones cannot be fit into the smallest style of hearing aids, so you need to be aware that if opting for the smallest hearing aids you will lose out on some key hearing aid technology.

***Dual microphones are still the most effective technology to improve hearing speech in noise (accessories aside)***

Other technology we think you should consider:

- [Made for iPhone and Android technology](#) (with direct TV streaming)
- [Lithium-ion rechargeable hearing aids](#)
- [Telecoil loops](#)
- [Accessories](#) – as below

Your Audiologist should make it clear what technology you will get in each style so you can choose what is most important to you and so that you do not miss out on key technology to make your life better. Cosmetics v functionality.

Ensure your hearing aid provider can explain the benefits of the technology across a range of hearing aids.

At Crystal Hearing we update our website regularly and list the very latest hearing aids of the leading global brands – click below:

[Phonak](#) – [Signia](#) – [Widex](#) – [Oticon](#) – [ReSound](#) – [Unitron](#) - [Starkey](#)

Many hearing aid providers offer free trials (as manufacturers issue us with demo hearing aids). Not all hearing aids can be demonstrated – an order may need to be placed to try the most appropriate hearing aids for you.

## **Hearing Aid Accessories**

Unfortunately hearing aid accessories can also be quite costly and this often means they can be overlooked, especially after a costly hearing aid purchase. This is unfortunate as they can give significant improvements to peoples lives when used effectively.

The latest development in hearing aid accessories is **direct TV streaming** – meaning you can stream your TV direct to your hearing without the need for wearing a neckloop accessory. This only applies to the latest hearing aids incorporating [direct streaming technology](#).

Other accessories to consider:

- **Remote microphones** – to stream third party voices (great in the car and for meetings)
- **Landline telephones** – accessories for streaming landline calls direct to your hearing aids
- **Mobile phone streamers** – for connecting mobile phones direct to your hearing aids (for hearing aids pre-dating direct-to-mobile hearing aids)
- **Remote controls** – make better use of your hearing aids with dedicated programs and easier volume control

Your provider should explain the merits of these accessories prior to your purchase, and make it clear if any of the above accessories can be added at a later date – as you may commit to a purchase thinking these can be added and that may not be the case.

### ***Don't under estimate the benefit of hearing aid accessories***

The latest hearing aid accessories can be viewed and bought [here](#).

Current NHS hearing aids can also utilise these hearing aid accessories.

## **Pricing**

There are two things that stand out with hearing aid prices – they are expensive items, and prices can vary hugely between the companies that sell them.

Businesses have overheads, and of course they need to make a profit. The high cost can be justified, to a point. We live in a free market and it is up to you to shop around - going cheap doesn't necessarily give you the best deal; paying more doesn't necessarily give you the best service. Find a happy medium that gives you the best product, with a professional unbiased service, at a fair price. At Crystal Hearing we believe this is what we offer.

Once you have looked through the various brands you will see that each manufacturer follows a similar trend - they all make hearing aids in the seven key hearing aid styles, and they generally release the same styles (or minor variants of them) over a spread of four or five technology levels at varying price points.

Quite often people ask which hearing aid do you recommend (price wise) - the reality is the best technology is in the most expensive models and most people can gain from this extra technology. But we say choose the best hearing aid to suit you budget and take advantage of your money-back period to exchange for a better model if needed.

 **Remember – you have a money back period to take advantage of.**

Find out what the price includes – most providers include ongoing aftercare. Check how this works. Check the warranty period – 2 years is industry standard.

Crystal Hearing prices vary from about £1400-£3200 a pair - some companies charge up to £5000 or even £6000 for the exact same premium hearing aids.

Specsavers rebrand hearing aids and sell at discount prices – these are generally older versions of the latest models.

Another common question, or consideration is '***do I really need to buy two hearing aids***'? - The simple answer is **YES**. If you have a hearing loss in both ears you should wear two hearing aids. The key benefits of wearing two hearing aids include:

- Improved hearing - especially in noise
- Reduced listening fatigue
- Better localization of sounds

You are better off choosing two lesser cost hearing aids than one more expensive equal cost hearing aid.

A good audiologist will explain the merits in full. Anyone considering a single hearing aid purchase should at least take advantage of a free trial of a binaural hearing aid fitting.

## Money back guarantee

Please check the fine print before paying a deposit. Some companies give full refunds, some retain a small fee, some may retain a high fee. A fair fee should be acceptable. At Crystal Hearing we retain just £50 in the event of a refund request; we may have spent many sessions with you by that time.

## Grants for Free Hearing Aids

Some people may be entitled to grants for free hearing aids.

1. [Access to Work](#) – to assist hearing disability in employment
2. [Grants for the Deaf](#) – for children and young adults
3. [Disabled Student Allowance](#) – to assist hearing disability whilst studying
4. [Veterans Hearing Fund](#) – for those who have served the UK armed forces

## Tax benefits

Hearing is a disability, and as such you can claim your hearing aids as a business expense – this could save you 40% tax as a high earner, plus the VAT element.

If you work for someone else perhaps ask if they can pay for your hearing aids, and then deduct them as an expense via your salary – this means you pay the sum before your tax is deducted and could save 25% (or 40% for higher earners) plus the VAT element.

[For tax benefits please read more here](#) - and seek advice as tax rulings can change

## And finally, on ‘pricing’ - discounts

Crystal Hearing offer a range of discounts as follows:

1. Early upgrades
2. Discounted aftercare packages
3. Couples purchases – i.e. his and hers
4. Insurance replacements – we'll pay your excess
5. Travelling a long way to see us

## **Helping to Save You Money**

## Fitting your hearing aids

Professional fitting of hearing aids requires a full understanding of the many different programming interfaces by the leading brands. You should have confidence that your Audiologist understands how to set-up the hearing aids for your specific needs.

Hearing aids should be set-up with the client present – certain important parts of the programming cannot be done without the client present.

The hearing aids should fit well and should be comfortable. Do not accept poor fitting hearing aids – you will be wearing them every day for many years.

Digital hearing aids work automatically but may be set-up to give the user control of volume and additional programmes to help in difficult listening environments.

Most companies take payment at fitting and offer a money back guarantee – normally 30 days or 60 days. **Hearing aid retailers can extend this period if prior notice is given to the manufacturers** – if you are struggling ask your Audiologist to extend your credit period.

Always check you are getting the hearing aids you are paying for – your receipt should say the make, model AND specification of the hearing aids. i.e. **Phonak - Audeo - M70.**

We can now printout a client fitting report of your hearing aid settings – **ask for it**. It

will give you useful information.

If you continue to struggle with your hearing aids, try an alternative brand and compare them for fit and performance. If your provider cannot provide an alternative for you to try, then seek a refund and go elsewhere. Be satisfied with your fitting.

### Remote aftercare

Modern hearing aids are now being developed to include 'remote assist' programming. This is most appropriately used for fine-tuning after the first fit.

'Remote assistance' is an excellent development in hearing aid but care should be taken when to use it - as down the line it may be that your hearing aids need repair rather than retuning. Ongoing yearly aftercare visits should be in person.

### Some hearing aid providers may try to fit you quickly at the initial consultation to save time. This is not usually a good idea.

If a hearing aid provider tries to fit you in your first visit, it may be that they are trying to get rid of existing stock aids – this 'could' mean that you are not getting the right hearing aids for your needs. Remember to research the technology mentioned above and see what is important to you before you visit anyone and make a commitment.

It would be prudent to ask your audiologist about post-purchase costs. Batteries and wax guards are minimal cost, but rechargeable hearing aids may incur more significant charges when the batteries expire.

## Care and Maintenance

You should be given clear instructions how to maintain your hearing aids. Plus, an instruction booklet, maintenance tools, and a carry case.

You will receive at the least a starter pack of some batteries and some spare wax guards.

There are many online videos showing how to maintain most hearing aids.

[\*Visit our YouTube Channel\*](#)

## Follow-up

It is normal to have a follow-up consultation after 1-2 weeks to check the settings are ok and to go over how to use and maintain your hearing aids. It can be quite normal to require several visits to get everything working to your satisfaction – you should never feel that you are being a problem client.

**New users take  
typically 2-4  
weeks to grow  
accustomed to  
their hearing aids**

## Acclimatisation

Clinical research has shown that it takes the typical new user of hearing aids about 2-4 weeks to acclimatise to wearing and benefiting fully from hearing aids. For this reason, it is important to find a hearing aid provider that offers a minimum 30-day returns policy.

If you are not happy you should ask for assistance and, if necessary, use your money-back-period as there may be alternative hearing aids worth trying.

## Aftercare

It is quite normal to see your Audiologist once a year on average. Your Audiologist will thoroughly check over your hearing aids and remind you of good care practice. They will retest your hearing and reprogram the hearing aids if necessary.

Some clients require less ongoing care and may benefit from buying hearing aids at a reduced price without the ongoing aftercare, and then pay ad-hoc as required – see unbundled packages on page 7.

## Life of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids sit in hot, humid and waxy ear canals all day - they WILL breakdown.

Manufacturers suggest a reasonable life-span of hearing aids to be 5 years and they all generally stop repairing hearing aids after 5-7 years (it varies between manufacturer). After this you can still have your hearing aids repaired at independent hearing aid repair centres to prolong their life if you wish - we can assist with this.

## Warranties

Standard warranty on hearing aids should be 2 years. This may be extended to 3, 4 or 5 years at cost. The warranty on hearing aids covers breakdown due to mechanical fault – it does not cover accidental damage or loss. Be aware some small parts may not be covered, such as custom earmoulds.

## Hearing Aid Insurance

Some providers may offer insurance packages. We do not at Crystal Hearing.

We advise customers to insure their hearing aids on their home contents insurance. An alternative is to use **AssetSure Insurance** – call 0208 0033 190 and quote introducer number 100030.

## END NOTE

It is important to have a fair understanding of what you want from a hearing aid provider – and for that you ideally need to do some research.

We understand this can be very daunting and confusing. Hopefully this guide has given you a clearer understanding of what to expect and where to start.

Points to remember:

**Don't delay** - the sooner you seek help for a hearing loss the better the results will be.

**Research** - take some time to find out about the latest hearing aids.

**Adaption** - it may take a few weeks to adapt to wearing hearing aids

**Accessories** - consider accessories to give extra benefit.

**Communicate** - if you are having problems, or are not satisfied, tell your Audiologist.

**Don't give up** - work with us and we will get you results.

**Money back guarantee** - use it if needed, for an exchange or a refund.

**Realistic expectations** - your hearing is damaged, so it will never be what it used to be.

**CRYSTAL**  
—  
—  
—  
**HEARING**  
Hearing Care Solutions

**Mobile: 07957 465 084**

**Freephone: 0800 180 4075**

**Email: [info@crystalhearinguk.co.uk](mailto:info@crystalhearinguk.co.uk)**

# A Word of Warning

Dementia and atrophy of hair-cells:

The longer you leave treating your hearing loss the harder it is to treat – and there can be lasting effects of this. Nerve cells are like muscles – use them or lose them - if you don't use them, they can lose their ability to function properly, and the nerve bundles in the brain can redirect their function elsewhere. After long periods of time this can be impossible to reverse, and will reduce the effectiveness of hearing aids.

Recent studies have confirmed the close link between hearing loss and dementia – showing that unaided hearing loss can massively increase the risk of developing dementia. There are many links to read on this – [here is one](#) – our advice is to seek help for hearing loss at the earliest opportunity.

The headlines from scientific papers:

- Baltimore 2011 – Older people with mild hearing loss are twice as likely to develop dementia
- Ameiva et al. 2015 – The use of hearing aids is associated with less cognitive decline
- The Lancet 2017 – Mid-life hearing loss may account for up to 9.1% of preventable dementia cases worldwide
- Eurotrak 2018 – Only 11% of hearing aid users are aware that dementia is a related health risk in their condition
- University of Manchester 2018 – The rate of age-related cognitive decline 75% following the adoption of hearing devices