

Charges for lost or damaged hearing aids

This leaflet explains the charges that may apply if you lose or damage your hearing aid/s

Audiology

Why are we charging for replacing hearing aids?

Your hearing aid is a valuable instrument on loan to you from the NHS.

Any hearing aid lost or damaged through neglect will incur a charge for replacement.

The current lost aid fee is displayed in Audiology waiting area's and clinic rooms. This fee does not cover the complete cost of replacing the aid. The Trust is not making any profit and charges go towards the purchase and fitting of the new hearing aid.

Changes in lost aid fee will be displayed for 3 months in Audiology waiting areas before the change is enforced.

How can I keep my hearing aid safe?

If you have fitted your hearing aid and mould/thin tube correctly it is very unlikely it will fall from your ear. If you are unsure how to fit your hearing aid please speak to the Audiologist at your next appointment or attend repairs for further instruction.

When we fit your hearing aid, we give you a free pouch.

We recommend that you keep your hearing aid in the pouch and store it in a safe place.

If you have lost your pouch we will replace this free of charge.

If you are concerned about losing your hearing aid, we can issue a retainer cord free of charge. This attaches to your hearing aid and clothing, and will prevent the hearing aid being lost if it falls from your ear.

Remember to switch your hearing aid off when not in use, otherwise it may whistle and annoy other people.

Remember to store your spare batteries out of reach of small children and pets as they can cause serious health issues or death if eaten.

What happens if I accidentally break my hearing aid?

The charge will only be made if the damage is through neglect. Examples of neglect include:

- Marks of damage through neglect or poor storage such as rust, melted casing, teeth marks.
- Exposure to excessive moisture from showers, baths, swimming
- Damage from domestic appliances such as washing machine, microwave

- Tampering by patient such as gluing parts of hearing aid together
- Some hair products (hairspray, oil etc) will also damage your hearing aid

Are there any exemptions to the lost aid fee?

There are a few specific exemptions for the lost aid fee. However persistent losses through neglect may result in a charge even if you fulfil one of the exemption criteria:

- You are under 18 years of age.
- Hearing aid was issued prior to 1st January 2009.
- Victims of burglary, car theft or mugging on provision of a crime number
- People with documented dementia or other documented memory issues
- War pensioners irrespective of the reason for the war pension
- Patients with a terminal illness
- Loss due to neglect within the Trust (eg lost on ward)
- You hold a current HC2 or HC3 certificate on provision of evidence
- You are registered blind or partially sighted on provision of evidence

How should I report that I have lost or damaged my hearing aid?

Please contact us via phone or email so we can book a repair appointment.

We can be contacted on the following numbers:

Hearing Services Centre & James Preston Health Centre on
0121 507 4875

Audiology Department at Lyng Health Centre, Rowley Regis Hospital & Neptune Health Park on
0121 612 2366

Contact us via Relay:

Via UK Relay App/ Textphone (prefix 18001)

Lines open Mon-Fri 8.30am-4.30pm (except for Bank holidays)

Our email address is: **swb-tr.audiology@nhs.net**

At the repair appointment you will be asked to fill out a lost aid form explaining how you lost/damaged your hearing aid. Please give as much information as you can.

If you feel you meet one of the exemption criteria and must provide evidence, eg you are in receipt of a war pension please bring this evidence with you. Staff will take a copy of this for our records.

Please report a stolen hearing aid to the Police and obtain a crime number from them.

Staff will review your form and advise whether a lost aid fee is applicable. You will receive official confirmation of the charge in writing.

Hearing aids will not be replaced until full payment has been received.

We only accept payment by cash or cheque in Audiology.

Card payments can be made by phone on 0121 507 4869 or 0121 507 4337, opening times are Monday - Friday 10am - 1pm, and 2pm - 3pm.

What if I find my lost hearing aid after I've paid for a replacement?

We recommend that you check carefully around the home or car, retracing your steps before you report a hearing aid as lost.

Any hearing aids reported as lost and subsequently found must be handed in to Audiology.

Unfortunately once the fee is paid and the hearing aid is replaced we are not able to refund any money.

Can I appeal against the charge?

Yes, appeals must be made in writing before payment is made and the hearing aid is replaced.

If you do not meet the exemption criteria but have evidence that you think excludes you from the charge please let the staff know. This will be taken into consideration by the Head of Audiology.

If you have previously lost or damaged a hearing aid and successfully appealed against the lost aid fee, any subsequent losses where you feel you have grounds for appeal will require a another appeal application as judgement will be based upon your circumstances at the time of the loss.

Please send any appeals to:

Head of Audiology

Hearing Services Centre
City Hospital
Dudley Road
B18 7QQ

or

Head of Audiology

Audiology Suite
Lyng Centre for Health & Social Care
Frank Fisher Way, West Bromwich
B70 7AW

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