



20 November 2019

Change in hearing care provider

Why do I need to change my provider?

In the early part of 2018 the CCG underwent a procurement process for its non-complex hearing service for people aged 55 and over. Contracts were successfully awarded in January 2019 to six providers, four of whom were new. One of the previous providers, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, decided not to bid for this contract. There are some real benefits with the new service following extra investment by the CCG. This includes improved access, by offering a wider choice of qualified providers, and clinics in the community rather than a hospital setting.

The CCG are aware that the transition to the new providers has not been as smooth as we would have liked, and we have produced some Frequently Asked Questions below which may be helpful.

Who are the 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

Hidden Hearing

Phone: 0800 037 3050

- Rectory Lane Bracknell England RG12 7GR

How has this been communicated to patients?

As part of the transition to the new providers in early 2019, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust wrote to over 10,000 patients who had accessed the service over the past five years, explaining the change and given the option to select one of the six providers to continue with their care. The CCG then communicated news of the change to our key partners, including Healthwatch, GPs and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs). A set of frequently asked questions were also published on our CCG website to answer patient queries. If we didn't reach you through these methods, we are sorry. We are providing additional information which we hope is helpful.

"Working together to deliver excellent and sustainable healthcare"



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

No. Depending on the letter you have received from Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, you have been asked to either contact your chosen provider directly or to return your choice to Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust 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 East Berkshire CCG 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?

The Outside Clinic is an at-home service so they will do home visits.

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, please contact a new hearing care provider, of your choice, 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.



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:

East Berkshire CCG complaints
SCWCSU PALS
King Edward VII Hospital
St Leonards Road
Windsor
SL4 3DP

Tel: 0300 123 6258.
E-mail: scwcsu.palscomplaints@nhs.net