

Hearing Impairment Network for Children and Young People (HINCYP)

Annual Report 2022/23

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Introduction

The Hearing Impairment Network for Children & Young People (HINCYP) was established in 2019. Its aim is to support services and families to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Scotland with bilateral severe, or profound hearing loss, through better access to high quality specialist care and support.

HINCYP works through a partnership of patients from 0 to 18 years, their families and friends, health care professionals, education and social work professionals and the voluntary sector.

Current Position

The network, along with other national managed clinical (NMCN) and diagnostic networks, have been impacted as stakeholder ability to be involved in network activity has reduced. This reduction has been due to pressures brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and an increased prevalence of flu, RSV and other winter viruses that had a severe impact across our health and care system.

HINCYP has been further impacted by two key issues. Firstly, the network has been without a Lead Clinician (LC) since March 2021. The new LC, Jane Gallacher will start post on 1 May 2023. Secondly, the announcement in March 2022 by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care that a national audiology review group, led by independent chair Professor Jacqueline Taylor was set up. This was set up due to failings highlighted in standards of care provided in the NHS Lothian Paediatric Audiology service, following an independent review conducted by the British Academy of Audiology. The review group is expected to make recommendations to improve audiology services in Scotland.

As an established multi-disciplinary NMCN, HINCYP is in a strong position to react quickly to any recommendations from the review group due to its established stakeholder links. Members of the Steering Group (SG) have continued to meet throughout 2022/23 where updates from the National Audiology Review were shared.

In the absence of a LC during 2022/23, as part of the contingency arrangement, leadership SG was provided by Angela Bonomy, Chief Executive Officer, Sense Scotland (Steering Group Chair) and Adrian Carragher Head of Audiology / Chair Area Clinical Forum, NHS A&A.

Highlights

Given the circumstances mentioned above, it was agreed that the network would have a limited programme of activity with 3 key objectives agreed. This was to take into consideration reduced capacity of network members, in particular Angela Bonomy and Adrian Carragher who were appointed as chairperson for the Reference Group and Structural Leadership and Governance subgroups, respectively.

Due to the reduced workplan objectives, 100% of these were achieved during 2022/23, including:

- Successful recruitment campaign that resulted in the appointment of a new LC, effective from 1 May 2023.

- Re-introduced the collection of the Local Record of Deaf Children (LRDC) process and scoped the potential to make this process easier in the future. The collection of this data is key to knowing the total number of children and young people with severe or profound hearing loss, before the network can help drive improvements in service provision. There is no alternative data collection method.
- Agreed infographic (diagram 1) to outline the National Referral Pathway that shows the different referral routes. This will be used by any anyone looking to access audiology services, including patients. This explains when, and how to make a referral to audiology and should ensure that everyone has equitable access and referrals made are appropriate.

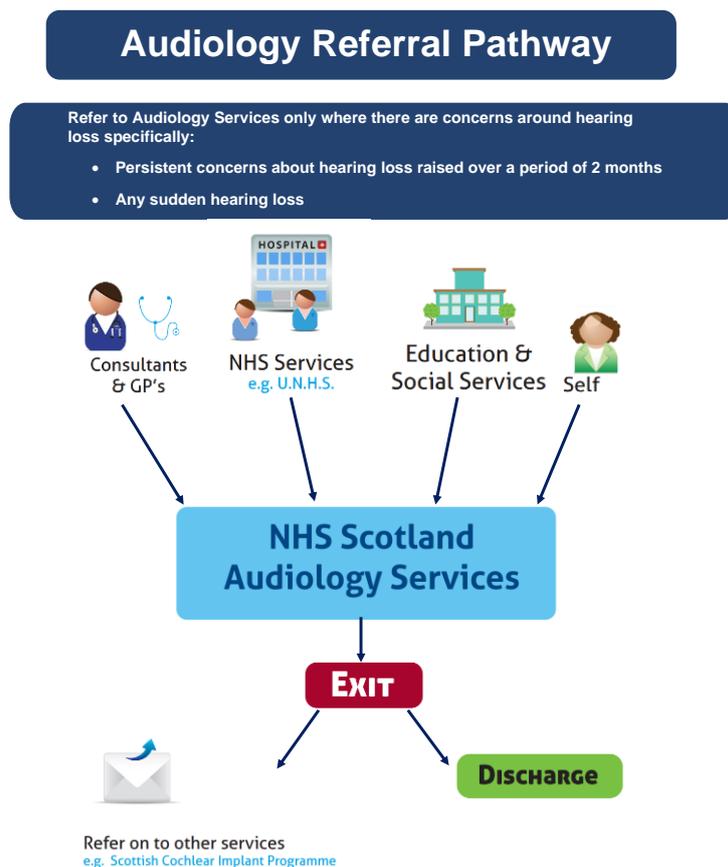


Diagram 1 – Referral Pathway Infographic

The network will look to develop both activities mentioned above further as part of 2023/24 Quality Improvement work plan objectives.

The Network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economic and climate friendly practices.

Looking forward – 2023/24

The network's priority for 2023/24 will be to consider the recommendations from the National Audiology Review Group - Independent Review of Audiology in Scotland and agree HINCYP's role in leading or supporting actions to deliver change and achieve improved outcomes for people of Scotland.

Finance

The network did not spend any of its allocated £5,000 budget during the reporting period.

Risks & Issues

No risks have been identified at this stage, however once the recommendations from the National Audiology Review Group - Independent Review of Audiology in Scotland are available, these will be reviewed and any risks and issues that could impact the function of HINCYP will be identified and reported via NSS governance procedures.