



**IMPARTIAL ADVICE ON BUYING A
HEARING AID**

We receive a lot of phone calls from people that have paid independent companies for a private hearing aid, which can be very expensive, and have then been disappointed with the result. We cannot comment on one dispenser over another but have put together a list of things to look out for if you do decide that you would like to buy privately.

- ❖ It is recommended that you exhaust all the NHS options first.
- ❖ Ask your local Audiology department if they can recommend a local private dispenser. Some audiologists within audiology departments also work as a private dispenser.
- ❖ Ask friends/family who have been happy with their private hearing aid where they bought it from.
- ❖ Choose a well established dispenser.
- ❖ Choose a dispenser that has a shop base.
- ❖ Your hearing should be tested in a sound and vibration proof room, not in your own house.
- ❖ Check if the dispenser is a member of the Hearing Aid Council.
 - The Hearing Aid Council
 - Witan Court
 - 305 Upper Fourth Street
 - Central Milton Keynes
 - MK9 1EH
 - Telephone 01908 235700

- ❖ Ask the dispenser if they offer a money-back guarantee.
- ❖ If the dispenser wants to visit your home for a consultation then be prepared for the potential typical home-sale pressures.
- ❖ Choose a local dispenser as you may have to make several visits.

Private Hearing Aids

Advantages

- You can choose the type of hearing aid you want.
- Your hearing aid could be ready for you to wear within a few weeks

Disadvantages

- The hearing aids are expensive to buy; costs can range from about £300 to £2,500.
- If you buy an aid for each ear then the cost will be increased.
- You will have to buy your own batteries
- If your aid breaks, you will have to pay for it to be repaired.
- You will need to insure your hearing aid for loss, theft or damage.

NHS Aids

Advantages

- The hearing aids are free of charge
- The batteries are free of charge
- Audiology departments usually offer a free drop-in service for hearing aid repairs. This will hopefully mean the problem can be fixed immediately and you will not be without a hearing aid for long.
- You will be cared for by an ENT specialist and/or audiologist. They will exhaust other potential problems of your hearing loss before issuing a hearing aid.
- If your hearing becomes worse, you will be assessed and provided with a more powerful hearing aid free of charge.
- There is no financial incentive for the audiologist

- You will be given the best type of hearing aid your hospital issues to suit your type of hearing loss
- Additional audiological services may be available to you, such as a hearing therapist to advise you on how to get the most use out of the hearing aid, or environmental aids which could work in conjunction with the hearing aid.

Disadvantages

- You can not choose which type of hearing aid you get, though the NHS have a wide range and there should be one to suit your type of hearing loss.
- You may have to wait several weeks, or longer, for an appointment and then a few more weeks for your hearing aid.
- Not all audiology departments offer the same hearing aids so the range of aids available may vary depending on where you live.
- Some kinds of aids are not available on the NHS