

**Hearing Screening: what happens next?**

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Our research tells us that the impact of hearing impairment globally is immense! Large numbers of the population, many of whom are over 60 years of age are affected by hearing problems. We think it is a public health priority. But not many governments, local or national are prioritizing hearing. We, as professionals in hearing healthcare, think that there is a need to introduce better public health campaigns to increase awareness and to ensure that those with hearing problems have good access to services. Those involved in retail see an untapped market that might give great return on investment if only they could be identified and be willing to try hearing aids. Despite the impact, the unmet need and the opportunities around hearing impairment, there is a need to get greater consensus and leadership on what should be done. In the UK we have been addressing this by developing new models of services led by better, scientifically driven, decision making in primary care. The use of screening devices in primary care has been shown to be beneficial, leading to renewed interest and uptake of pathways designed around screening and triage of patient needs. For example, opportunistic screening of over 60s presenting for winter flu jab or annual diabetic check might be an effective way to ensure better holistic care for the individual involving hearing and communication. We think that this approach needs to be implemented and evaluated further across Europe before universal hearing screening in the over 60s is recommended.

