

## Programme Update

**To date over 130 NHS Audiology services have been or are in the process of being modernised.** All the remaining services (less than one-third of the total) are due to be modernised in the next financial year, with site visits due to start in early February 2004.

In addition to preparations for Fourth Wave, and ongoing work with the existing Modernised sites, we have been looking at ways of increasing capacity within NHS Audiology services. Initiatives include Hearing Direct and the Public Private Partnership (PPP), about which you can read more in this newsletter.



## Hearing Direct

– new project update

**Hearing Direct is a new service being piloted to help reduce waiting lists and pressure on Audiology Departments. Innovative ways of working are needed to address the national shortage of Audiologists, and Hearing Direct is one option being evaluated.**

The pilot provides two telephone-based services to adult hearing aid wearers. Firstly, patients who have been fitted with standard digital hearing aids receive a call 8 – 12 weeks post fitting, to 'triage' their need for an appointment at the clinic. This telephone assessment includes both a general follow-up questionnaire and the Glasgow Profiles. Based on the outcomes of the two questionnaires the Hearing Direct Advisor uses strict protocols to decide whether a follow-up appointment with an audiologist is needed. Secondly, advisors provide a telephone information line, enabling patients to find out details of local services and ask for advice about ongoing care and maintenance.

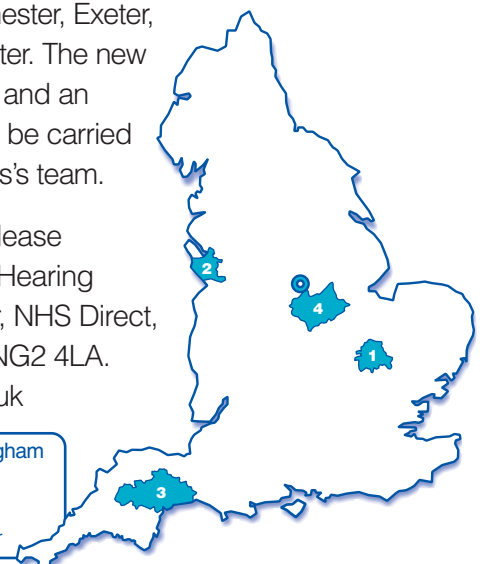
The service went 'live' at the end of October, involving four initial pilot sites: Chester, Exeter, Cambridge and Leicester. The new service will be audited, and an outcome evaluation will be carried out by Prof Adrian Davis's team.

For more information please contact: Helen Martin, Hearing Direct Project Manager, NHS Direct, City Link, Nottingham NG2 4LA.  
helen.martin@rnid.org.uk

**Project office** – Nottingham

**Pilot sites**

1 Cambridge	3 Exeter
2 Chester	4 Leicester



# New Hearing Aid Contract

**Julie Folkard, MHAS Audiologist**

All aids are available via NHS logistics and all MHAS sites should by now have been contacted regarding the allocation of a moderate power DSP hearing aid. Departments are however free to choose which aids to fit from the high power and children's range.

For some sites this may be the second change of hearing aid contract since modernisation began in 2000, and we know from previous experience what a challenging time it can be. It is however essential that we continue to update and improve the range and cost of our digital hearing aids to allow us to remain in reach of the very cutting edge of digital technology.

To help with the transition to the new aids manufacturer training is once again an integral part of the new contract. You should by now have been contacted by all suppliers and offered training. It is worthwhile putting time aside for this, despite the growing pressure on waiting lists, and all of the hearing aid suppliers

are happy to discuss your individual requirements. Increasingly this training can also provide the opportunity to reinforce and update staff on MHAS protocols and procedures ensuring that new staff in particular are fully conversant with the use of REM, GHABP and GHADP within the modernised patient journey.

Positively, sites that have been here before tell me that all of this is easier second time round. There has, as always, been the odd hiccup regarding IT compatibility but the first Prisma and Spirit hearing aids have been successfully fitted and good reports are coming in from both patients and Audiologists.

DSP hearing aids from the outgoing contract will cease to be available from 31st December 2003. Manufacturers will however continue to support and maintain these aids for at least another 5 years. If anyone is experiencing problems or has any queries attached to the new contract we would be happy to hear from you.

## Summary of contract DSP hearing aids with effect from 1st November 2003

	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Product</b>
Moderate power DSP adult	Oticon Siemens UK	Spirit II Direct Prisma 2M
High power DSP adult	GnReSound Oticon Phonak UK Siemens UK	Danalogic 283D Spirit II Power Supero 413AZ Prisma 2 DSP
Moderate power DSP children	Phonak UK Starkey Laboratories	Aero 211AZ Strata A312 MM
High power DSP children	Phonak UK	Aero 311AZ



# Action On!

In March 2003 the MHAS Programme commissioned the services of Action On's audiology team. This partnership has provided a unique opportunity to focus on innovative ways to give both 'modernised' and 'modernising' services additional support and guidance.

## So who's in the team?

Phil James heads up the team as Acting National Programme Lead and Becky Sutton and Michele Bennion both work part time as National Programme Managers.

## What are they doing?

In the first instance the Action On Programme aims to identify both the challenges and the opportunities that exist within Audiology, through engagement with clinicians, managers and patients. 'Away Days', where the project team will visit individual sites, help to achieve this especially as the focus at these sessions is on system modernisation, improvement and service change. Some of the key areas covered include process mapping, looking at staff skill mix, (for example the extended role of the Audiologist and the role of the Assistant) change management and action planning.

Secondly a number of new courses have been developed and are currently being promoted. 'Getting ready for MHAS' is aimed at fourth wave sites joining the programme. 'Wait Watching' focuses on capacity and demand and looks at tools and techniques to overcome waiting time problems. The 'Leading an Empowered Organisation (LEO)' course looks at leadership skills training and aims to enable staff to lead and effect change in their organisations.

Other initiatives being led by the team include developing the role of Audiology Modernisation Advisors (AMA) within each Strategic Health Authority and evaluating the effectiveness of hearing aid instruction using a group approach.

"The Audiology Profession is going places and Action On is happy to play a role to ensure it gets there. All in all this is a very exciting time for the team." (Phil James)

# Sustaining Modernisation

Progress on Modernising Hearing Aid Services within England has been extraordinary. By the end of March 2004, more than two-thirds of NHS Audiology departments within England will have been modernised and will be routinely fitting digital hearing aids to their patients. To support this, more than 1100 staff in Audiology departments and education services will have been trained in the use of the new protocols. By the end of March 2005, everyone in England should be able to access a modernised service.

However, we must continue to look forward. As you know, the MHAS programme's central funding ceases at the end of March 2005 from which point all costs will need to be met from the PCT's general allocation. This means that Audiology Services will be competing with every other service for a limited pot of money. Therefore, to ensure that your patients

## Public Private Partnership (PPP)

– National Framework for the Provision of Hearing Aid Services to the NHS

# MHAS Mentor Sites:

After an open application process for First and Second Wave services, a number of sites have been selected as MHAS Mentor Sites.

These are services that are following the protocols well, have developed good experience in fitting DSP aids using the (re)habilitative methods, and have found ways to overcome most of the problems that many services have faced. They are available as a resource for other services within their region, and can offer:

- Telephone support
- Access for visits to see how things work
- Visits to other services to help guide the process of change

There will also be regional seminars/workshops organised in the New Year, looking at managing the changes needed, and some of the clinical management issues that have come out of MHAS.

We hope that these services will become hubs for regional networks on issues relating to MHAS, and all of them are very keen to help support services within their regions. Please feel free to contact them about any issues relating to MHAS.

Not all regions had applicants which met the requirements, and we are particularly conscious of the fact that there is only one Mentor Site for children's services. There will therefore be a second round of applications in the New Year.

continue to benefit from the significant investment already made in terms of money, time and training, we all need to work hard on persuading PCTs that they must continue to fund this improved service.

The MHAS Programme Team have a number of ideas for targeting PCTs, GPs, and MPs and we will be working with our RNID Campaigns colleagues on this over the coming months. But it is equally important that you start to apply pressure at a local level to influence your key stakeholders. We are keen to help you with this and will be in touch in due course with suggestions as to how we might help. In the meantime, begin talking to your PCTs, get your local MPs involved, talk to your NHS Trust and/or PCT media relations people about using your local media, and start celebrating your successes and achievements!



All MHAS sites have now been invited to apply for funding to implement the PPP, but what is it and where did it come from?

It is well known that demand on existing

NHS services outstrips capacity and that demand is still increasing. MHAS is funding a series of initiatives to help increase capacity, including staff overtime, Hearing Direct and the PPP.

The PPP was first piloted in 2002. MHAS & NHS Purchasing & Supply Agency (PASA) worked with two NHS Trusts in Leeds and Shropshire to provide NHS Hearing Aid Services through local private hearing aid companies. The pilot was evaluated by the Medical Research Council Institute of Hearing Research (MRC IHR), which concluded that "By training hearing aid dispensers in modernised NHS protocols



### **London**

Charing Cross Hospital  
(Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust)  
*adult's service only*

### **Trent**

King's Mill Centre  
(Sherwood Hospitals NHS Trust)  
*adult's service only*

### **South West**

Truro  
(Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust)  
*adult's service only*

### **South East**

Winchester  
(Winchester and Eastleigh  
Healthcare NHS Trust)  
*adult's service only*

### **Eastern**

Peterborough  
(Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust)  
*adult's and children's services*

# Diary dates 2004/5

## **A&M Siemens 'Practice Navigator' User Group**

There are currently no dates for the User Group. Instead, users will be invited to join the 'Smart Group' – a secure forum for users of Practice Navigator to share ideas and discuss issues relevant to Practice Navigator. It is available by invitation only and comprises an Email Group and a file share area as well as an area for on-line discussions to take place.

## **A&M Siemens Regional Training Days**

5 Jan 2004	Gatwick Airport	9.30 - 15.30
9 Jan 2004	Holiday Inn, Oxford	9.30 - 15.30
14 Jan 2004	Thistle Hotel Exeter	9.30 - 15.30
27 Jan 2004	Jonathans Hotel, Oldbury, Nr Birmingham	9.30 - 15.30

## **GN Resound 'AuditBase' User Group**

14 Jan 2004	Merthyr Tydfil	10.00
10 Mar 2004	AGM – GNReSound	10.00
9 June 2004	Glan Clwyd/Wrexham	10.00
8 Sept 2004	Scotland (tbc)	10.00
12 Jan 2005	Southend/Peterborough/Swindon	10.00
9 Mar 2005	AGM - GNReSound	10.00

## **Action On**

26-27 Jan 2004	Getting ready for MHAS – Midlands
3 Mar 2004	Wait Watchers
14-16 Jan 2004	LEO Programme – Brighton
18-20 Feb 2004	LEO Programme – London

## **MHAS Generic training dates for 2004**

3-4 June	1-2 July	23-24 Sept	14-15 Oct
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and by working in partnership with them, we can be confident they will provide a high quality service. Furthermore private sector audiology can make available additional affordable capacity, so it makes practical sense to draw upon their expertise and experience.”

Subsequently during 2003, RNID, PASA and Department of Health undertook a national tendering process and selected Ultravox (Amplivox & Ultratone) and David Ormerod Hearing Centres for the provision of Hearing Aid Services to the NHS.

Trusts can now work in partnership with one

or both of these companies and give patients the option of seeing a Registered Hearing Aid Dispenser (RHAD) at an alternative location. The private dispensers involved will all be registered with the Hearing Aid Council and will have had additional training on MHAS protocols to ensure that they are fitting the same aids in the same way as the local NHS department.

People cannot approach the companies directly to make appointments because the Trust selects which patients to refer. The service remains free at the point of delivery and the NHS retains clinical responsibility for the patient at all times.

# News and updates

## **100,000 Patients Receive Digital Hearing Aids through MHAS Programme**

October 2003 was a landmark month as over 100,000 patients (including 3,000 children) have been fitted with digital hearing aids.

The reaction of patients has been very positive and congratulations to all of you who have worked so hard to make this new technology available to so many people.

## **MHAS Staff Update**

Since the last newsletter we have had a couple changes to the MHAS Programme Team. We are delighted to welcome Kiran Nirmal as a new MHAS Programme Manager. Kiran joined us in November, and will be taking over a number of existing MHAS sites as well as working with Fourth Wave sites. Kiran has an NHS background, having worked in both Primary Care and Hospital Trusts.

Tali Mendelsohn is currently on maternity leave, following the birth of her baby daughter in October. Congratulations to Tali and family! Helen Liles is also on maternity leave, expecting her baby in February. Phil Kennedy is Acting Head of MHAS Programme until December 2004 and Claire Evetts will take on additional line management responsibility during the same period.

# Contact information

For information or queries on communications, please email Fiona Beckman, MHAS Communications Manager, on [fiona.beckman@rnid.org.uk](mailto:fiona.beckman@rnid.org.uk)

For general MHAS enquires, please use the contact form on the website, [www.mhas.info](http://www.mhas.info), or telephone the programme office on **020 7296 8022**

MHAS member sites should continue to direct all queries to their assigned programme manager.

**The RNID Information Line** is available as a freephone resource for patients.

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for deaf and hard of hearing people