

Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Therapy Specialist Clinic (THTSC)

Audiology Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet explains what tinnitus and hyperacusis are. It also describes treatment using CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy).

What is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the sensation of sounds in the ears or head without any external source.

The experience of tinnitus may vary for each individual. There are lots of different types of sound that could be heard e.g. high-pitched ringing, humming noise, rushing noise etc. For some, tinnitus is a continuous noise but for others it can be intermittent. People may hear their tinnitus in just one ear, both ears or in their head.

Tinnitus is very common and approximately 10% of the population may experience persistent tinnitus.

What is hyperacusis?

Hyperacusis is intolerance of everyday sounds that cause significant distress and impairment in social, occupational, recreational and other day to day activities.

People with hyperacusis may experience sensitive ears, ear pain, fear, or annoyance when hearing certain sounds. Experience of annoyance and anger when hearing certain sounds is also called Misophonia.

Is there a cure for tinnitus and hyperacusis?

Whilst tinnitus and hyperacusis are distinct, they often co-occur, and they are often treated in a similar way, for example, using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which is specialised for tinnitus and hyperacusis management.

Why a talking therapy?

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a form of talking therapy. Our research shows that the main factor which contributes to tinnitus severity is the annoyance it causes, not necessarily its loudness.

CBT can help the person to first explore the process that produces tinnitus and/or hyperacusis-related annoyance. This can be different in each individual. The second step is to guide them on how to minimise the annoyance caused by their symptoms. Our research shows that the majority of people who undergo CBT gain the essential skills and knowledge in managing their tinnitus and/or hyperacusis-related annoyance.

Once the annoyance caused by tinnitus and/or hyperacusis is minimised with the help of CBT, it is likely that the perception of tinnitus and/or the oversensitivity to external noises (in the case of hyperacusis) also reduces.

What am I likely to gain from the therapy?

- More confidence and become less troubled by your tinnitus and/or hyperacusis
- Feel more supported
- Have a clearer knowledge of tinnitus or hyperacusis and why you have developed it
- Think about tinnitus less often
- Be able to hear and communicate better in everyday life
- Cope better in environments that you previously struggled with due to noise
- Understand when and how to protect your ears
- Be more empowered and be able to cope by yourself

Is the treatment effective?

A recent service evaluation of the THSTC survey at THSTC assessed patients view about the effectiveness for those who underwent audiologist-delivered CBT for management of tinnitus and hyperacusis. Of 75 patients who received audiologist-delivered CBT as part of their tinnitus rehabilitation 56% ranked its effectiveness at 5/5 (where 1 is no effect and 5 is very effective) and 29% marked it was 4/5. Patient's feedback about audiologist delivered CBT did not differ significantly between patients with tinnitus only and those with hyperacusis (with or without tinnitus).

How can I access the service?

You can ask your GP for a referral to our service. If you are seen by the ENT clinic, they can also refer you the service. We currently have clinics available at Royal Surrey County Hospital and Ashford Hospital. For more information please speak to an audiologist.

Contact details

Dr Hashir Aazh

(Team lead – Tinnitus & Hyperacusis Therapy Specialist Clinic)

Audiology Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, GU2 7XX.

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 2537

Fax: 01483 408338

Email: rsc-tr.Audiology@nhs.net

Clinic webpage: <http://www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk/Tinnitus-Hyperacusis-Therapy-Clinic>

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: N/A

Future review date: July 2021

Author: Jemma Hatton

PIN180725–1571

