

## HEARING LOSS

### **The state of the nation's attitudes to hearing loss**

Age related hearing loss is a fact of life, but why does it still play second fiddle to eye care? With the link between uncorrected hearing loss and dementia now a widely accepted fact, are we doing enough to look after our hearing, has the stigma of wearing a hearing aid gone away and are we aware of the services available?

# WELCOME TO OUR LATEST EDITION OF SOUND INSIGHT...

where we are focusing on hearing loss as part of  
Hearing Awareness Month.

We have teamed up with national survey  
agency OnePoll, to see what 2,000 UK adults  
think and do, when it comes to hearing loss.

## SELECTIVE HEARING – FACT OR FICTION?

**Pardon, can you repeat that please?**

We appear to be a nation that  
'suffers' from selective hearing,  
with **seven in 10** of us thinking  
that our partner pretends not to  
hear certain things.  
And men are 'worse' than women.

But there could be more to 'selective  
hearing' than laziness – it could be a sign  
of hearing loss.

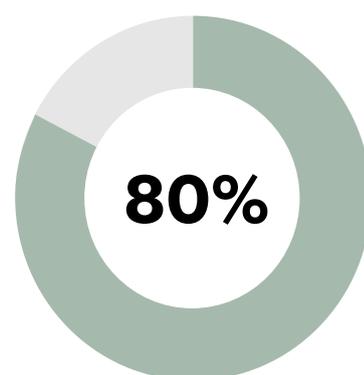


FOR MORE THAN HALF OF US, OUR PARTNER'S 'SELECTIVE HEARING' IS A MATTER OF CONCERN AND WE FEAR THEY COULD HAVE HEARING LOSS.

Of those surveyed, **four in 10** said their partners **find social get-togethers frustrating** because they get **too noisy and struggle to hear** what is being said, with 40% expressing concern they have difficulty understanding words in noisy environments. As a direct result, a third think their partner withdraws from conversation and 41% say they will also try to avoid socialising.

**More than 47%** admitted their partner had **never had a hearing test**, despite 67% being aware that hearing tests are free of charge and NHS hearing care services are available in many high street locations, such as opticians.

**ALARMINGLY, ALMOST 80% OF THOSE WE SURVEYED WERE NOT AWARE OF THE LINK BETWEEN UNCORRECTED HEARING LOSS AND DEMENTIA.**



## WHY IS THIS SIGNIFICANT?

Research has found that hearing loss can increase the risk of developing dementia by up to five times (source: Action on Hearing Loss), but also found that we could reduce dementia risk by a third if we all took action from midlife (source: University of Exeter).

**Dementia is a disease that affects over 850,000 people in the UK**, according to Alzheimer's Society. Taking the hearing check challenge could help identify hearing loss and delay the onset of dementia, and at the very least improve many aspects of your day to day life.

### SCRIVENS HEARING AID AUDIOLOGIST SAYS

*"Most of us will have experienced 'selective hearing' – either being the accused or the accuser. But joking aside, 'selective hearing' could be a sign of hearing loss. Left ignored, hearing loss can lead to isolation, depression and, evidence now suggests, dementia. The changes in our hearing are often so subtle and happen over time, that it can be very hard for us to notice the impact it's having on our lives and those around us. That's why regular hearing checks are so important. They are free of charge and most high street opticians, such as Scrivens, offer a hearing care service".*



# THE EARLY SIGNS OF HEARING LOSS

Experiencing hearing loss is not unusual – in fact you would be in good company. Action on Hearing Loss estimates that more than **10 million** – that's 1 in 6 – people in the UK have some degree of hearing impairment.

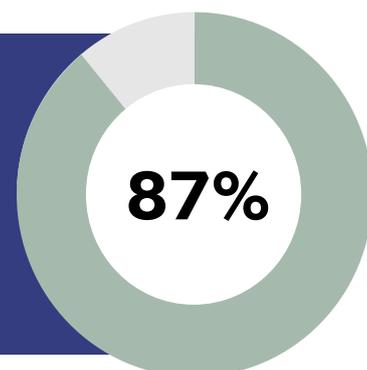


**1 IN 6 PEOPLE IN THE UK HAVE SOME DEGREE OF HEARING LOSS** (SOURCE: ACTION ON HEARING LOSS)

In most cases, hearing loss develops gradually and often goes unnoticed, until the impact on your own social and mental health wellbeing, and those close to you, becomes obvious.

It's important to spot hearing loss as soon as possible by having regular hearing checks, which are free of charge, because treatment is often more beneficial if started early.

Our survey revealed that **87%** of respondents had attempted to talk to their partner about hearing difficulties.



# SO, WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

Here are five signs that suggest your hearing is not just 'selective' and perhaps not what it should be.

1

YOU STRUGGLE TO HEAR OR KEEP UP WITH CONVERSATIONS AND MISUNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE SAY, AND IT'S MORE OBVIOUS IN NOISY ENVIRONMENTS

2

YOU TURN THE VOLUME UP ON THE TV OR RADIO AND OTHERS REMARK THAT THE SOUND IS TOO LOUD

3

YOU ASK PEOPLE TO REPEAT THEMSELVES ON A REGULAR BASIS

4

YOU FIND IT HARD TO HEAR ON THE TELEPHONE

5

YOU FEEL TIRED OR STRESSED FROM THE CONCENTRATION NEEDED WHILE LISTENING



## SCRIVENS HEARING AID AUDIOLOGIST SAYS

*"The chances are those close to us are more likely to spot the signs of hearing loss first, so it's heartening to see that we aren't afraid to raise the topic with our partners. The earlier we can seek help for hearing loss the better, as it can prevent common side-effects such as social withdrawal and depression."*

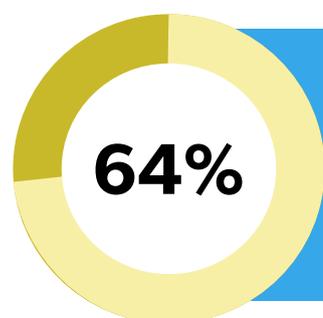
*"Whether or not we suspect our hearing isn't as good as it used to be, regular hearing checks are a good way of monitoring our ear health."*

# HEARING LOSS – IT'S NOT JUST AN OLD PERSON'S PROBLEM!

MOST OF US TAKE OUR HEARING FOR GRANTED, BUT IN THIS AGE OF CONSTANT NOISE THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) PREDICTS THAT **MORE THAN A BILLION** PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN **12 TO 35 YEARS** ARE AT **RISK OF HEARING LOSS** DUE TO RECREATIONAL EXPOSURE



And in the UK, the charity Action on Hearing Loss believes as many as four million young people are at risk of hearing damage from loud music - which can include tinnitus as well as hearing loss.



ADVANCES IN HEARING AID TECHNOLOGY MEAN HELP IS AVAILABLE AND THANKFULLY ALMOST 64% OF OUR SOUND INSIGHT RESPONDENTS WOULD WEAR A HEARING AID IF RECOMMENDED TO DO SO.

Although almost **14% would refuse** and a further **22% were unsure** what they'd do.

It appears vanity is the main reason we would say no to a hearing aid, with **32%** of people surveyed concerned it **makes them look old** and a further **33% saying it makes them feel old**. Almost a quarter don't like how they would look with a hearing aid and **more than 23% don't like the idea of wearing something in their ear**.

But for those that do embrace hearing aids, **71% wish they'd got them years ago** (Source: BIHIMA). Not only that, recent research shows that hearing aids seem to slow the progression of dementia – so it makes sense to get your hearing checked regularly from middle age.



## SCRIVENS HEARING AID AUDIOLOGIST SAYS

*"Our hearing is a key sense that we simply take for granted until it starts to deteriorate, and once it starts to go, there is no way of repairing the damage. Being able to hear and listen to music, laugh with our friends and communicate in general is an essential part of our mental wellbeing, which is why it's so important that we take care of our hearing throughout our lives."*

*"Thankfully the stigma associated with hearing aids is breaking down, but there are still a significant number of people who are concerned about how it symbolises old age. Hearing aids are now extremely sophisticated devices, and some are as small as a peanut, fitting comfortably and discreetly in our ear."*

# THE BEST ADVICE IS TO DO ALL WE CAN TO LOOK AFTER OUR HEARING.

Here are five top tips to help you do just that:

**1** **KEEP TO THE 60:60 RULE**  
If you listen to music – especially with headphones – try to stick to the 60:60 rule – 60% of your device's maximum volume for no more than 60 minutes a day.



## INVEST IN QUALITY HEADPHONES

Pay the difference and buy noise-cancelling headphones, so you don't have to turn your music or podcast up to hear it over background sounds

**2**

**3** **PLUG YOUR EARS**  
If you go to clubs, festivals or gigs, wear ear protectors or earplugs - this allows you to hear the music without damaging your hearing. It takes at least 16 hours of quiet time for your ears to recover from two hours in 100dB sound.

## TURN THE TV DOWN

If friends and family tell you the TV is turned up too loudly, then you should take heed. It could well mean that you are already in early stages of hearing loss and should get your hearing checked.

**4**

**5** **AVOID COTTON BUDS**  
Although the most popular way of cleaning our ears, cotton buds are far from ideal as it's very easy to damage the delicate inner ear.





SOUND INSIGHT  
REPORT | 2 0 1 9

## WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED OUR LATEST SOUND INSIGHT REPORT.

If you have concerns about your hearing (or even if you don't) why not take our [online hearing check?](#)

Alternatively, pop into one of our branches and take the hearing check challenge for free. Find your nearest Scrivens Opticians and Hearing Care branch at [scrivens.com](https://www.scrivens.com)

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