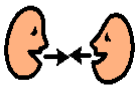
Communicating when someone has a hearing impairment

- Impacted ear wax can cause problems such as: hearing loss, pain, dizziness and mask infection in the ear. It is important that ear wax is monitored and treated. This involves options such as keeping the wax soft by using olive oil drops twice a week and seeing the GP to get ears examined and impacted wax removed as required.

- Is there anything else affecting communication that you need to be aware of e.g. how much someone understands, poor sight/glasses, mental health status?

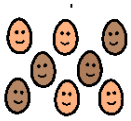
Make sure you are sitting or standing in the best position:



- Be at he same eye level and facing each other.
- Be close to the person (within 1m).
- Don't sit in front of a window – make sure light is on your face.
- You need good acoustics - a room with lots of hard surfaces e.g. large windows, bare floors and tables will make it difficult to hear speech.

- Avoid turning away or covering your mouth as you speak.

- Reduce distractions and background noise – anything from traffic noise to buzzing lights.



- Remember that someone may cope well on a 1:1 basis but have difficulty in a group situation.

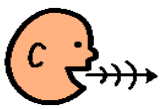
- Get the person's attention before you start to speak and make sure the person can see your face clearly

- Try to approach the person from the front to avoid startling them.

- Start one conversation at a time. Don't flick from topic to topic.

- Use short, simple sentences.

- Use slower or normal rate of speech but still use normal intonation and rhythm.



- You may need to speak louder – but don't shout.

Find out how the person communicates to others, and use these methods too.
For example do they use: speech or vocalisations
gestures or signs
body language, facial expression or eye pointing
objects of reference