



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

School Entry Hearing Screening Pathway in Wales



What is the School Entry Hearing Screening Pathway?

The School Entry Hearing Screening Pathway is a national service that will offer a hearing screen to all children who reach the age of five during their current school year (reception year). From September 2022, this will also include home-educated children in the year they reach the age of five.

The aim of the hearing screen is to identify children with a permanent significant unilateral (one ear) or bilateral (both ears) hearing impairment. The hearing screen may also identify children with a temporary hearing loss which may require monitoring and/or further input (such as temporary hearing aids and/or referral to an Ear, Nose & Throat doctor).

IMPORTANT

Children with programmable shunts must not be screened in this way as there is a risk of the screening equipment affecting the shunt. If your child has a programmable shunt, please contact your local audiology department to discuss this further.



How do I arrange a hearing screen in school?

If your child attends school, they will complete the hearing screen on school premises. The Hearing Screener will arrange a date with the school.

From September 2022, all home-educated children who reach the age of five during the current school year will also be eligible for the school entry hearing screen.

You will be contacted by your local audiology department to arrange the hearing screen. It will be held in a clinic location within your health board.

I have concerns about my child's hearing, should I wait for the school hearing screen?

If you have significant concerns about your child's hearing for six weeks or more, you should seek a referral to Children's Audiology Service via your GP practice.

The school entry hearing screen takes place throughout the school year.

Due to the number of schools to visit, we cannot guarantee when in the school year your child will receive their hearing screen.

Does my child have to have their hearing screened?

It is strongly recommended your child is screened in order to identify any hearing impairment so they can be supported with their speech and language development, and learning and social development.

Some hearing impairments can develop gradually, and some can be present in only one ear.

This may make it difficult for you to pick up a hearing impairment in your child without a hearing test.

Before the Hearing Screener visits your child's school, you will be sent an opt-out consent form.

If you do not wish your child to have their hearing screened, you should inform the Head Teacher in writing immediately.

What does the hearing test involve? Is there anything I can do to help my child prepare for the school hearing screen?

The test will be completed by an experienced Hearing Screener. It is a simple 'sweep test' where your child wears headphones to listen for a series of different sounds.

Your child is asked to respond when they hear the sound.

To prepare your child, you can make sure they are comfortable wearing headphones, and practice waiting types of games, such as "ready, steady, go."



What happens if my child misses the school hearing screen?

The Hearing Screeners will visit a school more than once. If your child is not present on the date of the first visit they will be screened at a later visit.

If your child isn't present on the second or third attempt and you wish them to have a hearing screen, please follow the instructions on the consent form.



What happens if my child does not pass the screen?

There are many reasons why your child may not pass their screen, including:

- They may have had a temporary hearing loss. This is very common in young children (e.g. hearing loss due to having a cold or ear infection).
- They may have been too shy, or not confident enough to complete the hearing test.
- They may have additional learning needs that mean the hearing test is not appropriate. These children will be referred directly to audiology services.
- They may have a hearing impairment that requires full assessment.

The Hearing Screener will return at a later date to repeat the screen.

If your child does not pass their second screen then they will be referred to the Children's Audiology Service for further assessment in a local hospital or clinic.