Title Covid-19: Telephone and postal hearing aid fittings for glue ear - pediatrics

Written by Zoe Duckworth ………………………………Signature

 Title, Trainee Healthcare Scientist

Approved by Leanne Smith …………………..…………Signature

 Advanced Audiologist

## For use in Audiology Department, Plymouth Hospital NHS Trust

By Audiology Staff

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**Background**

With the suspension of face-to-face appointments during the Covid-19 pandemic, there remains a need to support children with glue ear with temporary hearing aids, both BTE’s and BAHA’s. This SOP provides a system to enable that to happen, with parental consent. These guidelines must be considered within the context of each child’s individual circumstance and developmental stage.

**BAHA’s should be fitted according to the following criteria:**

A soft band BAHA device may be an appropriate clinical recommendation when the following criteria have been considered:

1. Hearing loss must meet the audiometric criteria for BAHA fit
2. When BTE hearing aids are contraindicated or have failed
3. Parental Choice
4. Evidence of truly fluctuating hearing not easily managed by a traditional BTE (behind the ear) hearing aid. This decision will be based upon audiometry results over time and parental report. This can also include a child’s age.

**Appointment Process**

Use the COVID-19 TELEPHONE GLUE EAR PAEDIATRIC FITTING template.

This will be a telephone appointment.

Confirm ID as normal for telephone appointments.

Explain the purpose of the call – to offer the parent the option of having their child’s hearing aids posted out.

**Advantages:** they will receive the aids now, rather than having to wait until after the current crisis changes.

**Disadvantages**: There will be no face to face contact for demonstrating the use of the aids and it will not be possible to check the fit of the moulds/BAHA or to make any changes from the child’s feedback.

If the parent declines a postal fitting, the child should remain on the waiting list.

If parent accepts and verbal consent is obtained for a postal fitting, continue with the call.

Take a brief history of any changes to the child’s hearing, ear infections ect.

Agree colour of aid/s (if BTE), or soft band (BAHA).

Agree use of volume control (if age appropriate) and indicator light.

**Advise the parents of the following;**

* The family should be counselled about expectations of the fitting including responses that may or may not be expected at the child’s stage of development. This should also include when to wear the hearing aids and how to establish hearing aid use.
* Fitting moulds and cutting tubes to length (BTE).
* Fitting the soft band and BAHA placement (for BAHA).
* Explain how the hearing aids work, including use of batteries and left/right markers.
* Explain use of controls and indicator light as appropriate.
* Care/cleaning of the hearing aids.
* Explain the importance of wearing the aids as much as possible and for the parents to continue to communicate naturally and often with their child.
* Explain what to look for regarding reaction to sound and the importance of monitoring any loudness discomfort.
* Explain the cause of feedback.
* Explain how to perform daily checks of the hearing aids.
* Explain how the tamperproof battery compartment operates.
* Explain how to recognise the need for new moulds and advise the parents on how often new moulds are likely to be required.
* Discuss BAHA Bluetooth connectivity.

**Follow Up**

All children will need to be seen for a review of their hearing. Advise parents that this will happen but we do not have a time scale on this at this stage.

In the meantime, offer choice a telephone follow up for 1-2 weeks time to check on her progress.

End call

**Programming Process**

* Tamperproof battery drawers should be provided for all babies and children under 5 years of age and the dangers highlighted and documented in the patient letter, which is sent out to families and other professionals.
* BTE fittings:
* Use DSL v5 target.
* Set hearing aids up using predicted RECD in the test box, connected to the Phonack software.
* Set volume control and indicator lights as previously discussed.
* Verify in the coupler using the HIT module.
* Save
* BAHA fittings:
* Click and fit
* Set up controls as discussed
* Save

**Administration**

Complete template

Post the aids along with:

* Paediatric glue ear telephone fitting appointment letter
* Soft band (BAHA)
* Paediatric care kit
* Hearing aid boxes
* Hearing aid instruction leaflet
* Batteries
* “How to look after your child’s hearing aid” leaflet

Email admin to confirm:

 Telephone contact completed

 Paediatric glue ear telephone fitting

 Date and time of telephone follow-up or face-to-face waiting list