

Getting Help

Professional groups and not-for-profit organisations provide services and support to those with hearing disabilities.

AT A GLANCE

- New Zealand's main hearing care professionals are audiologists, audiometrists, advisors on Deaf children, teachers of the Deaf, ENT specialists, hearing therapists, ear nurses, and hearing advisers
- Organisations providing support and services for people with hearing disabilities include - the Hearing Association, Deaf Aotearoa, Life Unlimited, National Foundation for the Deaf, and the NZ Federation for Deaf Children.

HEARING CARE PROFESSIONALS

Advisers on Deaf Children

Advisers are Teacher of the Deaf with specialist post-graduate training. They give specialist support and guidance to children with significant hearing loss, their families and their support services. They co-ordinate services, provide information, assess and monitor educational progress, and support audiological needs. This is an ongoing service provided from first diagnosis until the child leaves school. They are employed by the Ministry of Education and the Deaf Education Centres.



Audiologists

Audiologists are university-trained clinicians, with a post graduate degree in audiology, whose role is to identify and quantify hearing impairment, plan a pathway of rehabilitation, and guide the hearing impaired person to an improved quality of life. They work with all age groups. Treatment options include hearing aids, assistive listening devices, counselling and education in listening skills.

Audiologists can apply for government subsidies towards the cost of hearing aids on behalf of clients. To do this they must be full members of the NZ Audiological Society. Audiologists usually work in hospital audiology clinics, private practices, educational settings, universities, in research and for hearing aid manufacturers.

For more information including contact details, refer to www.audiology.org.nz

Audiometrists

Provide services including hearing assessments, hearing aid fitting and repairs, and advice on hearing aid care, use and maintenance. They undergo a shorter training regime than audiologists. Audiometrists usually work in hospital audiology clinics, private practices, and for hearing aid manufacturers. Their professional body is Academy of New Zealand Audiometrists Inc.

For more information including contact details, refer to www.anzai.org.nz

Ear Nurses

Ear Nurses work in outpatient settings, general practice, and in the community running Mobile Childrens' Ear Clinics.

They identify children with potentially serious middle ear disease and hearing loss, and provide a nursing treatment service to prevent the long-term effects of hearing loss.

For more information including contact details refer to www.ensg.co.nz

Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialists

ENT specialists are specialist doctors who deal with medical and surgical treatment of the ear, nose, throat head and neck. They work in hospitals and private practices.

For more information including contact details, refer to www.ornl.org.nz.

Hearing Advisers

Hearing advisers work in Hearing Associations and provide basic support and information services including:

- Basic screening of hearing (a pure tone audiogram), interpret the results and explain them
- Arrange referrals to professionals when appropriate
- Offer practical advice and help with using hearing aids and managing hearing loss
- Carry out minor hearing aid repairs such as replacing battery doors, wax guards and tubing and cleaning hearing aids. They can also send any major repairs to the manufacturer
- Provide information about hearing aids and other equipment to help in daily living (eg phones, TV devices), funding options, hearing loss, and rights to trying a hearing aid before purchasing
- Provide communication tips
- Offer other services including speech reading (lip reading) classes or support groups.



Hearing Therapists

Hearing therapists help those with a hearing impairment to adjust to hearing loss and to be as independent as possible. Their services are provided free to people aged 16 and over.

LIFE Unlimited hearing therapists hold a National Diploma in Hearing Therapy or equivalent and are trained to:

- Evaluate hearing
- Help with options for managing hearing difficulties
- Demonstrate assistive listening devices
- Advise on tinnitus management
- Refer to other health professionals, such as an audiologist.
- Help with improved communication in family, work and social situations.

For more information including contact details, refer to www.life.nzl.org

Teachers of the Deaf

Teachers of the Deaf (TOD) support deaf and hearing-impaired students in either Deaf Education Centres or in mainstream schools. They make regular visits a specified number of times each week to support students' classroom programmes. Support offered includes:

- Assisting in planning of Individual Educational Plan goals for students and in the implementation of IEP goals through individual tuition and in-class support
- Applying, modelling, and reinforcing a range of specialist communication strategies and techniques
- Checking students' assistive listening devices
- Organising and participating in Keep In Touch Days

ORGANISATIONS

Deaf Aotearoa

Deaf Aotearoa (formerly the Deaf Association) has 11 offices nationwide and an outreach service. It is the only nationwide provider of services to Deaf people and its governing body is ruled by elected Deaf members of the Deaf community. Services include:

- A New Zealand Sign Language interpreter's service
- Equipment assessments
- Support services
- Vocational training programmes
- Employment support
- Adult education programmes
- The New Zealand Sign Language Teachers Association

For more information including contact details, refer to www.deaf.co.nz

Hearing Association

The Hearing Association is the oldest and largest organisation working in the hearing disability sector. It was formed in 1932 as the New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing. At a national level it raises awareness of hearing-impairment issues and lobbies politicians, decision makers, corporations and service providers. At a regional level, its 32 member-associations provide services according to their ability and local needs, including

- Peer support for people with hearing loss, their families and whanau
- Counselling
- Devices to make life easier for those with hearing loss
- Information on all aspects of hearing loss and tinnitus, and about services and subsidies available

- Education on hearing loss and its impact, hearing protection, communicating with hearing-impaired people, and on supporting those with hearing loss
- Social activities for members
- Speech reading classes
- A place where people with similar problems can meet for support
- Ear care and hearing aid care services.

For more information including contact details refer to www.hearing.org.nz

National Foundation for the Deaf

The National Foundation for the Deaf (NFD) promotes the interests of New Zealanders with hearing disabilities.

It focuses on breaking down barriers for people with hearing loss, promotes the appreciation of good sound, and encourages all New Zealanders to protect and preserve their hearing.

The NFD is an incorporated society with six member groups, including the Hearing Association, NZ Federation for Deaf Children, and professional groups working in the hearing disability sector. The NFD's work includes identifying and dealing with issues affecting people with hearing disabilities.

It includes raising awareness of hearing preservation, lobbying government, corporates, and other organisations whose work impacts on those with hearing disabilities, and researching new ways to help people with hearing disabilities. It also provides financial support and scholarships through NFD trusts.

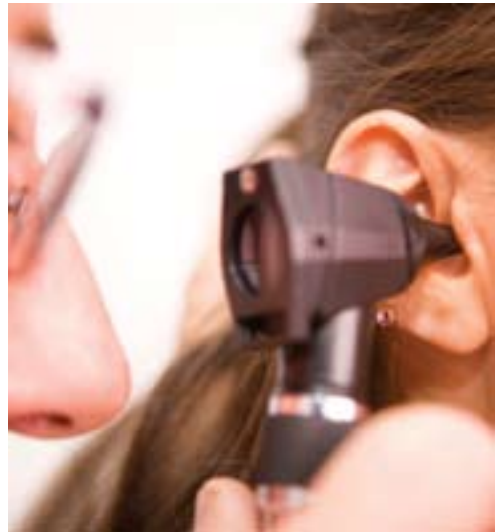
For more information including contact details, refer to www.nfd.org.nz

New Zealand Federation for Deaf Children

New Zealand Federation for Deaf Children Incorporated (NZFDC) represents the interests of children who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

It advocates for parents and children, offers information kits for families of newly diagnosed deaf and hearing-impaired children, provides tutor fee assistance, an assistive equipment subsidy, annual scholarships for tertiary students, and academic excellence awards for secondary school students.

For more information including contact details, refer to www.deafchildren.org.nz



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Want to know more detail? Go to www.hearing.org.nz

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