

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**4 JANUARY 2008**

**AUDIOLOGY SERVICES & ASSOCIATED WAITING TIMES**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To bring to the attention of the Health Scrutiny Panel issues around audiology and associated waiting times.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Panel notes the contents of this briefing and considers whether it would like to investigate the local position on audiology services and associated waiting times.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

3. The Panel may have seen news coverage over the Christmas period of the topic of audiology services and the associated waiting times. The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) conducted a research project whereby it asked 152 PCTs to supply information. It asked the current average time it takes a new adult patient to receive a hearing aid from the time of referral by a GP, amongst other questions.
4. According to the RNID, the research conducted found that 39% of new patients in England wait more than a year to have hearing aids fitted. The Department of Health has a target of 18 weeks for the procedure to be completed.
5. On a local basis and according to the RNID research, South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust (which runs James Cook University Hospital) has average waiting times of over a year (54 weeks), along with 9 other NHS Trusts.
6. The Health Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider whether it would like to consider the matter in further detail. The Panel could hold a single meeting, where all interested parties are invited to attend, debate the issues and

possible areas of concern and consider how the matter will be progressed in 2008.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7. The RNID press release can be found at [www.rnid.org.uk/mediacentre/press/2007/?ciid=311335](http://www.rnid.org.uk/mediacentre/press/2007/?ciid=311335)

### **Contact Officer:**

Jon Ord - Scrutiny Support Officer

Telephone: 01642 729706 (direct line)  
Email: [jon\\_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:jon_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk)