

### Notes – Deaf Centre Visit 6 February 2008

- **Communication breakdown** - It became apparent that effective communication with deaf or hard of hearing people is essential for providing quality health care.

People who work within the Audiology Department should be able to communicate with deaf patients.

It was conveyed that translation services within JCUH are poor. Sign Language interpreters should be available on request to attend appointments with the deaf or hard of hearing. This would ensure that appointments are not missed. Deaf patients are not approached when their name is called. There is a requirement for visual signs, display boards or a light system to be used, so a deaf people can see when they are being called to attend their appointment.

- **Appointments** – The Audiology Department does not automatically schedule regular hearing tests, check ups and reviews for users, unless they are requested to do so by the user. It is the individuals responsibility to request an appointment.
- **Deaf Awareness** – Employees of the Audiology Department do not seem to have any deaf awareness. Deaf awareness is essential in tackling discrimination, creating more positive attitudes towards deafness and enhancing communication skills.
- **Waiting list** – If an individual wishes to replace an analogue hearing aid with a digital hearing aid, they do not receive the replacement hearing aid for over a year. Users have been told that, in the first instance, providing children with digital hearing aids, before adults, is the department's priority.
- **Diagnosis** – Problems with the programming of hearing aids. Hearing aids do not seem to reflect peoples hearing loss. The Audiology Department was not willing to re-programme/test the hearing aids after complaints from the user (headaches/balance problems)
- **Complaints** – Users receive no response from the department when a complaint is made.
- **Information** – Patients are not informed of the services available to them.
- **Contact** – Deaf and hard of hearing individuals find it hard to make appointments, as many are unable to use a telephone.
- **Deaf Awareness Week** – The Audiology Department has been contacted regarding DAW. The department has not displayed any interest in supporting the activities scheduled to take place.

A simple letter will be sent to those young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in attempt to receive their views and experiences of audiology services.

Following completion of the review, representatives from the South Tees Hospitals Trust, Middlesbrough PCT and the Council will provide information to the Deaf Centre. The information will inform individuals of the findings and recommendations proposed as a result of the review.

Tracy and David have been invited to attend the HSP meeting scheduled to take place on 21 February 2008.