



North Wales Audiology Newsletter



Welcome to the third COVID edition of our Audiology Newsletter

We hope you enjoy the third edition of this newsletter during the pandemic. It contains information about the Audiology service and what to expect in the coming months. There is also a pattern for a face covering with a clear window that you can make at home, and some useful tips on choosing and wearing face coverings.



We are **still here for you** during this uncertain time of social distancing.

We have now restarted our service **by appointment only**. Our doors are still **closed**, so please **do not walk into the departments**. You can **contact us** by phone, email, letter or someone else can contact us on your behalf. We can then discuss the best way to help you and send anything you need by post.

If you are invited to an appointment, you will notice many changes to the department, such as hand gel and hand washing stations, masks and gloves, and very few chairs in the waiting areas.

We are continuing to offer the **hearing aid repair service via post** (see postal addresses and contact details below) and **advice via telephone or video**. We are still welcoming new referrals too, and will contact everyone that is referred to us.

Supporting care homes and carers

We have contacted all care homes in North Wales to say that we are still here for you.

We would like to help all carers with making sure that hearing aids are working well and that poor hearing isn't adding to worries at this time.

- **Batteries and tubing** can be sent out to you by post on request.
- We can do **video calls**, e.g. to guide you through a hearing aid repair.
- **Lost hearing aids** can be re-made without attending for many people.
- **Appointments** will now be available on a priority basis.

Please contact us for any enquiries or support.

Clear view face masks and coverings

You will be asked to wear a **face mask or cloth face covering** when you come into Audiology, unless you are exempt from this.

We know how important it is to be able to see **lips and the face** when you have a hearing loss or are deaf. Masks and coverings help to keep you safe but do affect communication.

Cloth face coverings can be made with a **clear window** to wear yourself. Please turn over for a pattern and tips for these.

Clear view masks are being developed for health and social care services where surgical masks are currently used. We hope to have these available for our staff soon.

Audiology Department Contact Details

(If you live in North Powys, please use Wrexham Maelor Hospital contact details)

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If you have any comments or questions regarding this newsletter please contact us



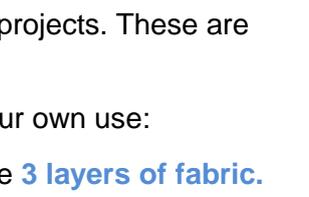
How to make your own “clear view” face covering

For this simple version, you will need:

- 2 paper rectangle patterns: large 28cm by 19cm, small 10cm by 5cm
- Three different layers of fabric, such as: an inner absorbent cotton layer, a middle firm cotton layer and a polyester outer
- A clear plastic (vinyl) panel, e.g. cut from a clear pencil case
- Elastic or fabric strips
- Pins and a sewing machine (or needle and thread)

How to make:

1. Using the large pattern, **cut three fabric layers** into rectangles, 28cm long by 19cm wide. Match up the fabric, with the 2 outer right sides together and the middle layer under. Pin the layers together (1).
2. Using the small pattern, **cut a rectangle in the centre** of the top layer, 10cm long by 5cm wide. Cut the other layers to match. Remove pins (2).
3. In the rectangle windows, cut a diagonal snip in each corner. On each layer, use this snip to **fold 1cm hems**. Pin and sew each hem (3).
4. Match the fabric layers back together. Pin all layers together and snip the outer corners. **Sew 1cm from all 4 outer edges** (4a). Remove the pins. Turn inside out through the window (4b).
5. **Cut the plastic** into a rectangle, 12cm long by 7cm wide. Insert this in the window, between layers. Pin and sew this in, through all layers (5).
6. Finally, take the top long edge and fold it over to the middle and back again to **create a double fold**. Pin the fold securely. Repeat for the bottom edge. Place the **elastic strip ends** into the edges. Sew along the sides to secure the folds and the elastics. Remove pins (6).



More face covering tips and patterns

You can find cloth face coverings sold online and made in local community projects. These are advised in crowded areas and may be required on public transport.

Here are some important tips when making or buying a face covering for your own use:

- The Welsh Government has advised that face coverings should have **3 layers of fabric**.
- The **edges should be tight** against your face and nose. A pipe cleaner or straightened paperclip can be inserted and stitched in place to bend tight to the nose.
- With hearing aids, **longer elastics** around your head can be more comfortable.
- If the covering has a clear panel, this should not be tight on your mouth. There should be **space for your breath** to move through the surrounding fabric.
- To reduce **fogging**, smear shaving foam on the clear panel and leave to dry, or rub a dry bar of soap onto the panel and polish until clear.
- **Do not touch** the face covering once you have put it on your face.
- The face covering should be removed carefully after use and placed in a wipe clean or washable bag until it can be washed. **Wash in hot soapy water** and dry fully before reuse.
- Choose a **contrasting colour fabric** to your face if you use British Sign Language.
- You should seek advice from your GP before using if you have a **respiratory illness**.

There are many **video guides and patterns** online. The National Deaf Children's Society have written about some here: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/diy-face-masks-with-clear-panels/>