



Member Documentation

# Scope of Practice

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## **Audiologist (UK, private)**

An audiologist is a person who is qualified to provide a comprehensive array of professional services related to the prevention of hearing loss and the audiologic identification, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of persons with impairment of auditory and vestibular function, and to the prevention of impairments associated with them.

The central focus of the profession of audiology is concerned with all auditory impairments and their relationship to disorders of communication. Audiologists identify, assess, diagnose, and treat individuals with impairment of either peripheral or central auditory and/or vestibular function, and strive to prevent such impairments.

The audiologist is an independent practitioner who provides services in hospitals, clinics, schools, private practices and other settings in which audiologic services are relevant, including private homes.

### **Scope of Practice**

The scope of practice of audiologists is defined by the training and knowledge base of professionals who are licensed and/or credentialed to practice as audiologists. Areas of practice include the audiologic identification, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of individuals with impairment of auditory and vestibular function, prevention of hearing loss, and research in normal and disordered auditory and vestibular function. The practice of audiology includes:

#### **Identification**

Audiologists develop and oversee hearing screening programs for persons of all ages to detect individuals with hearing loss. Audiologists may perform speech or language screening, or other screening measures, for the purpose of initial identification and referral of persons with other communication disorders.

#### **Assessment and Diagnosis**

Assessment of hearing includes the administration and interpretation of behavioural, physio-acoustic, and electrophysiologic measures of the peripheral and central auditory systems. Assessment of the vestibular system includes administration and interpretation of behavioural and electrophysiologic tests of equilibrium. Assessment is accomplished using standardized testing procedures and appropriately calibrated instrumentation and leads to the diagnosis of hearing and/or vestibular abnormality.

#### **Treatment**

The audiologist is the professional who provides the full range of audiologic treatment services for persons with impairment of hearing and vestibular function. The audiologist is responsible for the evaluation, fitting, and verification of amplification devices, including assistive listening devices. The audiologist determines the appropriateness of amplification systems for persons with hearing impairment, evaluates benefit, and provides counselling and training regarding their use.

Audiologists conduct otoscopic examinations, clean ear canals and remove cerumen, take ear canal impressions, select, fit, evaluate, and dispense hearing aids and other amplification systems.

Audiologists assess and provide audiologic treatment for persons with tinnitus using techniques that include, but are not limited to, biofeedback, masking, hearing aids, education, and counselling.

Audiologists also are involved in the treatment of persons with vestibular disorders. They participate

as full members of balance treatment teams to recommend and carry out treatment and rehabilitation of impairments of vestibular function.

The audiologist provides audiologic treatment to persons with hearing impairment and is a source of information for family members, other professionals, and the general public. Counselling regarding hearing loss, the use of amplification systems, and strategies for improving speech recognition is within the expertise of the audiologist. Additionally, the audiologist provides counselling regarding the effects of hearing loss on communication and psycho-social status in personal, social, and vocational arenas.

### **Hearing Conservation**

The audiologist designs, implements, and coordinates industrial and community hearing conservation programs. This includes identification and amelioration of noise-hazardous conditions, identification of hearing loss, recommendation and counselling on use of hearing protection, employee education, and the training and supervision of non-audiologists performing hearing screening in the industrial setting.

### **Additional Services:** Ear wax removal

**PURPOSE:** Use of the microscope and suction is carried out to: Remove cerumen and hygroscopic foreign bodies in patients who are not appropriate for ear irrigation. & Remove discharge, keratin or debris from the external auditory meatus or mastoid cavity.

**SCOPE** This procedure is only to be carried out by a doctor, nurse or audiologist who has trained in the use of the microscope and suction. An individual assessment should be made of every patient to ensure that micro-suction is appropriate. The suction generates loud noise and patients should be advised of this.

### **RISKS:**

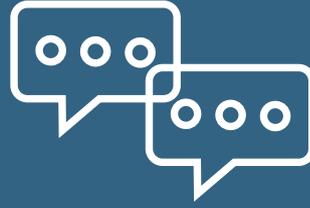
- Perforation of tympanic membrane caused by impression taking or ear wax micro suction.
- Injury or bleeding to the ear canal or TM caused by impression taking or ear wax micro suction.
- Infection caused by impression taking or ear wax micro suction.
- Advice risks: missing a referable condition such as a new cerebral haemorrhage.

**Notes:** Ear impression taking is a relatively rare activity, as custom in the ear aids become less popular. I would average this at 4 procedures a week for a full-time audiologist.

Ear wax removal has become a major part of an audiologist's job, post-pandemic. I would estimate an average of 20 procedures a week.

In the main, it is unlikely that any major injury would occur due to the actions of an audiologist.

On the HCPCTS website (our regulator tribunal body), I found one only complaint of injury to an ear canal. I would imagine the risks are minimal.



## Queries & Questions

BSHAA has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate and up to date.

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The Society welcomes comments on this document or if you have any questions or queries, please contact us through:



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