

Audiometry - frequently asked questions

How long will the test last?

You will be asked to answer a short pre-test questionnaire and then carry out a 12-minute listening activity on your laptop or computer connected to the internet and headphones or earphones. Together, these should take around 20 minutes.

When will I get my results?

Feedback on your performance will be available on the screen immediately after completing the test.

Will my GP receive a copy of my results?

We will not share any information with your GP. No results will go on your NHS records. You are welcome to discuss these with your GP but you will have to take a copy with you.

Can I still participate if I no longer work for the police?

Yes. We're happy to see those who are still employed by the police, and it is just as valuable to us to see those who have left or retired.

I have hearing loss. Am I eligible to take part?

If you have hearing loss you are welcome to take part. The only people who aren't eligible are those who developed hearing loss before joining the police, or have hearing loss due to illness, injury, ear disease, medication, or surgery.

I have never used the Airwave radio. Am I eligible to take part?

If you have never used an Airwave radio, you are welcome to take part.

Can I complete this on my phone?

No, this must be completed on a computer or laptop with earphones or headphones connected. Unfortunately, many phones do not have adequate audio or processing capability to handle test sounds correctly, so the software is deliberately designed for computer/laptop only.

Can I participate during work hours?

You should check with your manager.

Do I have to complete this?

No. Whether you take part in this part of the study is entirely up to you. Even if you do decide to take part, you can change your mind at any time without giving a reason. If you

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agree to take part in this Airwave hearing test, we will add the data we collect to the data we already hold.

Do I need to complete this straight away?

No, but we encourage you to do so as soon as you realistically can.

I have had a follow-up appointment for Airwave before. Do I need to do this?

Yes please, we are inviting all participants to complete this online hearing test.

Can I join the Airwave Study?

We are not currently recruiting for new participants but would be very happy to include you if recruitment were to open again.

Am I able to withdraw from the study?

There are two options for withdrawing your data from the cohort, and we would ask that you make clear which you have selected when you contact us:

- 1. No Further Contact:** We will not contact you again. We may continue to use samples and information provided previously, and to obtain and use further information from your health records.
- 2. No Further Access:** We will not contact you again or obtain further information about you. We will anonymise your data by erasing all personally identifying information linked to your data. Personal identifiers stored in secure archives may remain for the lifetime of the archive but will not be used again.

You can inform the Study team of your withdrawal by downloading the withdrawal form at <https://police-health.org.uk/withdrawal-airwave-tissue-bank> and then print and return it to the address shown on the form (postal or email).

Please note that it is **NOT** necessary to withdraw from the Tissue Bank just because you have retired from the Police Service or have moved to a job where you don't use the Airwave system. Your continued membership of the cohort is valuable to the ongoing research and we hope you will stay with us.

What are the possible side effects or risks of taking part?

It is important to ensure that you are not exposed to excessive noise. A calibration stage prior to the hearing test will give you the opportunity to adjust your volume control until sounds are clearly audible but not uncomfortably loud. All sounds during the hearing test are kept within this safe range.

I am unable to proceed due to an incorrect DOB

This is likely due to the database having the incorrect DOB. Please contact the study team who can check and confirm if the DOB is correct or needs to be amended.

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I tried to do the hearing test but the sound didn't work correctly and I was advised to exit before taking the test. Why was this?

The hearing test relies on listeners having suitable audio and computer equipment. Sometimes the pre-test checks show that the equipment isn't suitable. If other equipment is not available to you, then you will not be able to take the test. However, the information you gave during the survey will still be very helpful to us.

I got part-way through the hearing test and something went wrong

Very occasionally, problems can occur mid-test due to internet connectivity or audio playback issues: slow loading, test results not displayed, or sound not working correctly (causing you to get all answers wrong or all answers right, which is not usual). Please exit the test if this happens, and we apologise for any frustration caused. The information you gave during the survey will still be very helpful to us.

I have concerns about my hearing. What should I do next?

Our ears pick up wear and tear over the years and hearing loss is common, especially beyond age 60. Hearing assessment and treatment is free via the NHS, by visiting your GP. If there isn't an obvious cause for hearing problems (e.g., wax or infection), your GP will refer you to an NHS audiologist, either in a hospital or in a high-street clinic. Whichever location you choose, you will have the option for treatment free of charge.

I need further information on hearing loss and/or tinnitus

The charity RNID has a wealth of resources, available on their website:
<https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/>