

## **Standards of proficiency for hearing aid audiologists / dispensers**

[Profession-specific standards are shown in italics]

### **Expectations of a health professional**

#### **1a: Professional autonomy and accountability**

##### **Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:**

1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times
- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user, including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing
- be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

1a.4 understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

1a.5 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

1a.6 be able to practice as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

- be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem
- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
- recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions

1a.7 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and be able to practise accordingly

1a.8 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
- understand the need to maintain high standards of personal conduct
- understand the importance of maintaining their own health
- understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning

## **1b: Professional relationships**

### **Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:**

1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals
- be able to make appropriate referrals

1b.2 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

1b.3 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7.0 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible

- recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

- *be able to explain the financial implications of suitable hearing aid systems*

- *be able to recognise anxiety and stress in service users, and recognise the potential impact upon communication*

- *understand the difficulties in communication experienced by those with impaired hearing and be aware of appropriate steps to overcome communication barriers*

- *recognise the need to seek external assistance in situations where communication is ineffective for whatever reason*

1b.4 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users

- *recognise the need to use appropriate interpersonal and communication skills to facilitate effective care for those with impaired hearing*

- *understand the need to empower service users to manage their aural health and related issues*

- *recognise the need to provide advice on self treatment where appropriate*

## **The skills required for the application of practice**

### **2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs**

#### **Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:**

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

- *be able to undertake and record appropriate case histories*
- *understand the need to make and keep full and accurate records of assessment results, hearing aid prescriptions and actual settings, rehabilitation plans and outcomes*

2a.2 be able to use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
- *be able to check that equipment is functioning accurately and within specifications and to take appropriate action in the case of faulty functioning and operation*

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange clinical investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information being collected

- *be able to interpret the data arising from case history, physical examination and hearing assessments.*

## **2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs**

### **Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:**

2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions

- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
- be able to conduct evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of a range of research methodologies
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different client groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors
- *be able to formulate and provide appropriate advice regarding hearing aids and associated technologies and their use to facilitate informed choices by clients*

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skillfully

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients, clients and users and those involved in their care

- *ensure that the environment in which service users are seen is appropriate for the assessment, service, care and attention given*
- *be able safely to use appropriate techniques and equipment to assess hearing loss and the physical condition of the ear*
- *be able to select and evaluate the most appropriate hearing aid system and performance settings and/or associated technologies for service users*
- *be able to plan, implement and manage appropriate rehabilitation programmes for clients to optimise outcomes*
- *be able safely and competently to take impressions of the ear*
- *be able safely and competently to programme and to physically fit hearing aids*
- *understand the need to provide service users with access to continuing care, maintenance and support*

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records

## **2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions**

### **Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:**

2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
- be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- *be able to recognise those conditions or circumstances that require the involvement of other professionals and give the appropriate advice to service users*

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2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review
- *be aware of emerging technologies and new developments in hearing assistance*

## Knowledge, understanding and skills

### 3a: Registrant hearing aid audiologists must:

3a.1 know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention

- *understand, in the context of hearing aid audiology, -*
  - o *the anatomy and physiology of the outer, middle, inner ear and central auditory pathways*
  - o *medical and psychosocial aspects of hearing loss, tinnitus and balance problems*
  - o *psycho-acoustics*
  - o *acoustics, speech production and perception*
  - o *the measurement of hearing and of other auditory system functions*
  - o *hearing aid and associated technologies including selection, fitting, programming and evaluation.*
  - o *appropriate approaches to auditory rehabilitation*

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual

### 3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
- be able to select appropriate protective equipment and use it correctly
- be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control