

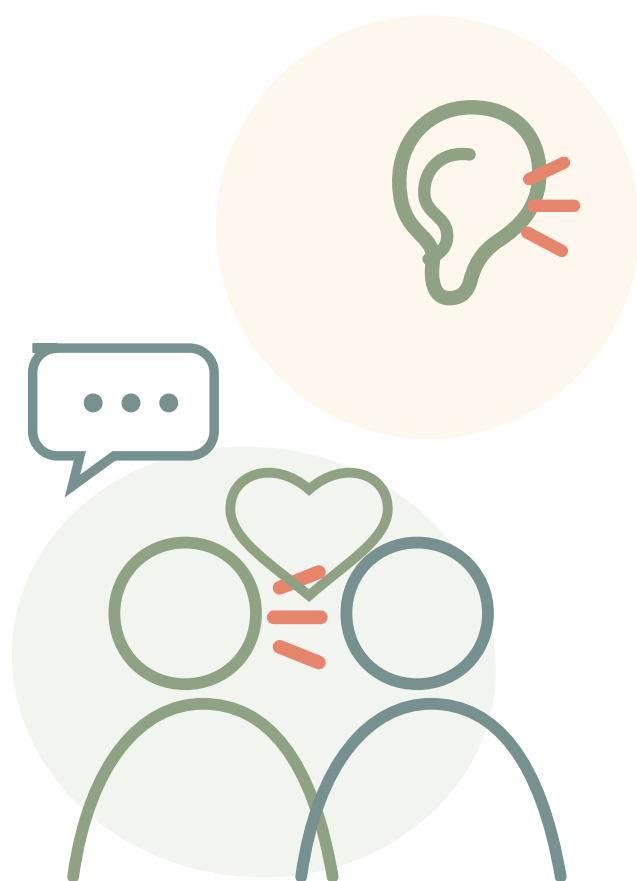


Your Care

Before assuming dementia has worsened...

could hearing be part of what has changed?

If Mum or Dad seems more confused, quieter or harder to talk to, check the hearing and communication conditions before assuming dementia is the reason.



HEARING + COMMUNICATION + SIMPLE NEXT STEPS





Start with what you are seeing

Could hearing be getting in the way?

Hearing changes can make a person look more confused or withdrawn because they are only catching part of the conversation.



WHAT FAMILIES OFTEN NOTICE

- The TV or radio is much louder than it used to be.
- They ask people to repeat themselves more often.
- They answer a different question from the one you asked.
- They struggle more when there is background noise or several people talking.
- They go quiet, withdraw, watch your face closely or turn one side towards you.

A USEFUL QUESTION TO ASK

**Instead of only asking “Has the dementia got worse?”
ask “What did they actually hear?”**



Check the simple things first

Before you assume dementia has changed, check the hearing. A hearing aid problem, earwax or a change in hearing can make everyday conversation much harder.



START HERE

These are the first five things to check.

- 1 Are hearing aids being worn and switched on?
- 2 Are they clean, charged and fitted comfortably?
- 3 Could wax, a blocked filter or another hearing-aid problem be affecting them?
- 4 Does Mum or Dad seem to hear better on one side?
- 5 When was the last hearing check, and does this change feel new?

Small changes can give you useful clues.

If hearing improves when aids are working or you sit on a particular side, make a note of it.



Change the conditions

Try making the conversation easier before repeating it louder. A quieter room, a visible face and fewer words can sometimes help more than raising your voice.



FIVE SIMPLE CHANGES

1

Turn down the background noise

Switch off the TV or radio if you can.

2

Face the person

Make sure they can see your face clearly.

3

Use one idea at a time

Keep sentences short and avoid several questions at once.

4

Give them time

Wait for a reply before asking another question.

5

Show as well as say

Try a written choice, photo, object or simple gesture.

If it does not make sense, rephrase it.

Repeating the same sentence more loudly is not always clearer.

A family check, not a hearing test

For a few days, notice what makes conversation harder and what makes it easier. You are looking for a pattern, not a score.



What changes when you change the conditions?



Is it harder when the TV, radio or other people are talking?



Is one side noticeably easier than the other?



Does it improve when hearing aids are in and working?



Does facing the person or using written choices help?



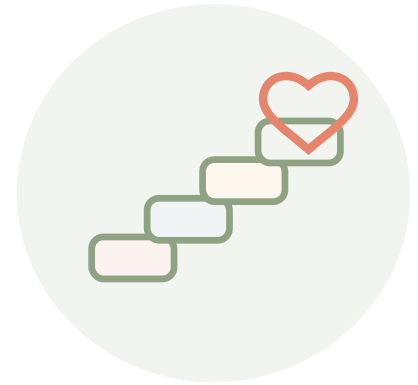
Is this problem new, or is it gradually becoming more noticeable?

MAKE ONE USEFUL NOTE EACH DAY

“Communication worked best when...”

What to do with what you have noticed

Start with one practical next step. You do not need to solve everything at once. Use what you have noticed to decide what to do next.



1 Keep hearing aids working

Clean, charge and check them regularly.

2 Use the better conditions

Quieter room, visible face, one speaker at a time.

3 Arrange a hearing check

If hearing seems to be gradually getting worse, speak to the GP or an appropriate hearing service.

4 Take your notes

Specific examples are more helpful than simply saying “the dementia seems worse”.

USEFUL WORDING FOR A GP OR HOSPITAL TEAM

“We have noticed a change in how Mum hears or understands conversation. Could her hearing, hearing aids or another health problem be checked rather than assuming this is simply her dementia?”

Want to talk through what you have noticed?

0117 947 7422

If hearing changes suddenly, or there are other new health or safety concerns, seek appropriate professional advice promptly.