

Sensory Consortium Service
Good Outcomes Positive Futures

Auditory Processing Disorder Policy

Policy last reviewed: 4th December 2023

Agreed by: Leadership and Management Team

Frequency of review: Every three years

Date of next review: December 2026

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Children who experience hearing difficulties even though their audiogram shows they have normal hearing thresholds may sometimes be diagnosed with Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)

The World Health Organization Report on Hearing (March 2021) states

“Some children and adults may experience hearing difficulties in the absence of any substantial audiometric findings. These may have an auditory processing disorder (APD) – a generic term for hearing disorders that result from the poor processing of auditory information in the brain. This may manifest as poor hearing and auditory comprehension in some circumstances, despite normal hearing thresholds for pure tones.”

APD refers to difficulty *processing* what is heard, rather than a problem with the *transmission* of the sound from the ears to the brain. This is because the ears and brain do not fully synchronise as there is interference with the way the brain recognises and interprets sounds, especially speech.

Clinicians disagree on the definition of APD, the test battery and criteria for APD diagnosis. APD often exists alongside other learning difficulties such as language delay, dyslexia, poor memory or attention deficit disorder.

British Society of Audiology’s (BSA) definition of Auditory Processing Disorder 2018 states that

‘APD is characterised by poor perception of speech and non-speech sounds. It has its origins in impaired neural function, which may include both the afferent and efferent pathways of the central auditory nervous system (CANS), as well as other neural processing systems that provide ‘top down’ modulation of the CANS’.

There are three accepted categories of APD

- Developmental APD
- Acquired APD
- Secondary APD

There are four main areas of suggested intervention strategies

- Modification and management of the listening environment
- Assistive listening technology
- Structured listening programme
- Compensatory strategies such as visual reinforcement or verbal rehearsal, chunking and developing active listening skills among others.

APD and the Berkshire Sensory Consortium (BSCS)

Support for pupils with APD is not part of the core BSCS work. However, BSCS are able to offer an APD package for which there is a charge.

All pupils must have a confirmed diagnosis of APD from an Audiovestibular Physician or an Audiologist with specialism in APD.

The young person will initially have been assessed in a clinical setting which provides limited information about how they are functioning in an educational environment and therefore a more functional assessment is recommended.

Please contact BSCS for the cost of this package

The package will include

- A functional listening assessment, such as Speech in Noise
- Observation of functional listening skills in the educational environment
- An audit of the listening environment
- A report outlining the key findings with advice and recommendations

Our APD package can be commissioned by contacting BSCS
sensory.consortium@achievingforchildren.org.uk