

Children's
Services

Resourced Provision Network - Early Years Spring Term 2026

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Welcome and agenda

- Input from the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service - developing a communication-friendly environment for children with sensory loss
- Resourced Provision Toolkit – Area 7 – ‘Student relationships and friendships’
- Sharing of good practice and discussion
- Supportive documents
- Ordinarily Available Provision – How to Guide
- Updates from settings
- AOB



Hampshire
County Council

Specialist Teacher
Advisory Service

Sensory Loss Awareness Training

19th March 2026

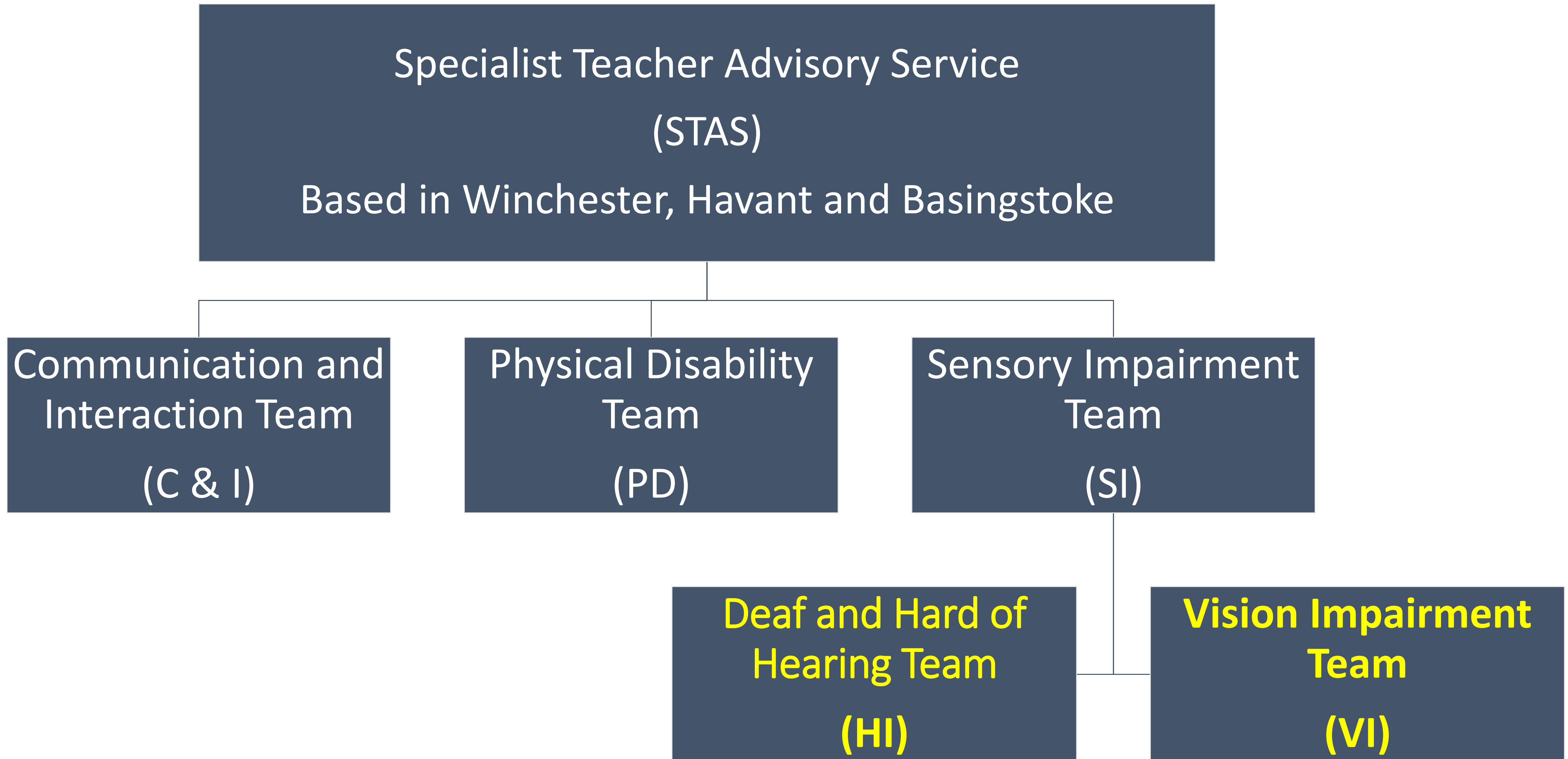
Kathryn Rodgers and Kate Martindale

Specialist Teacher Advisors: Vision Impairment and Deaf
and Hard of Hearing

Aims of the session

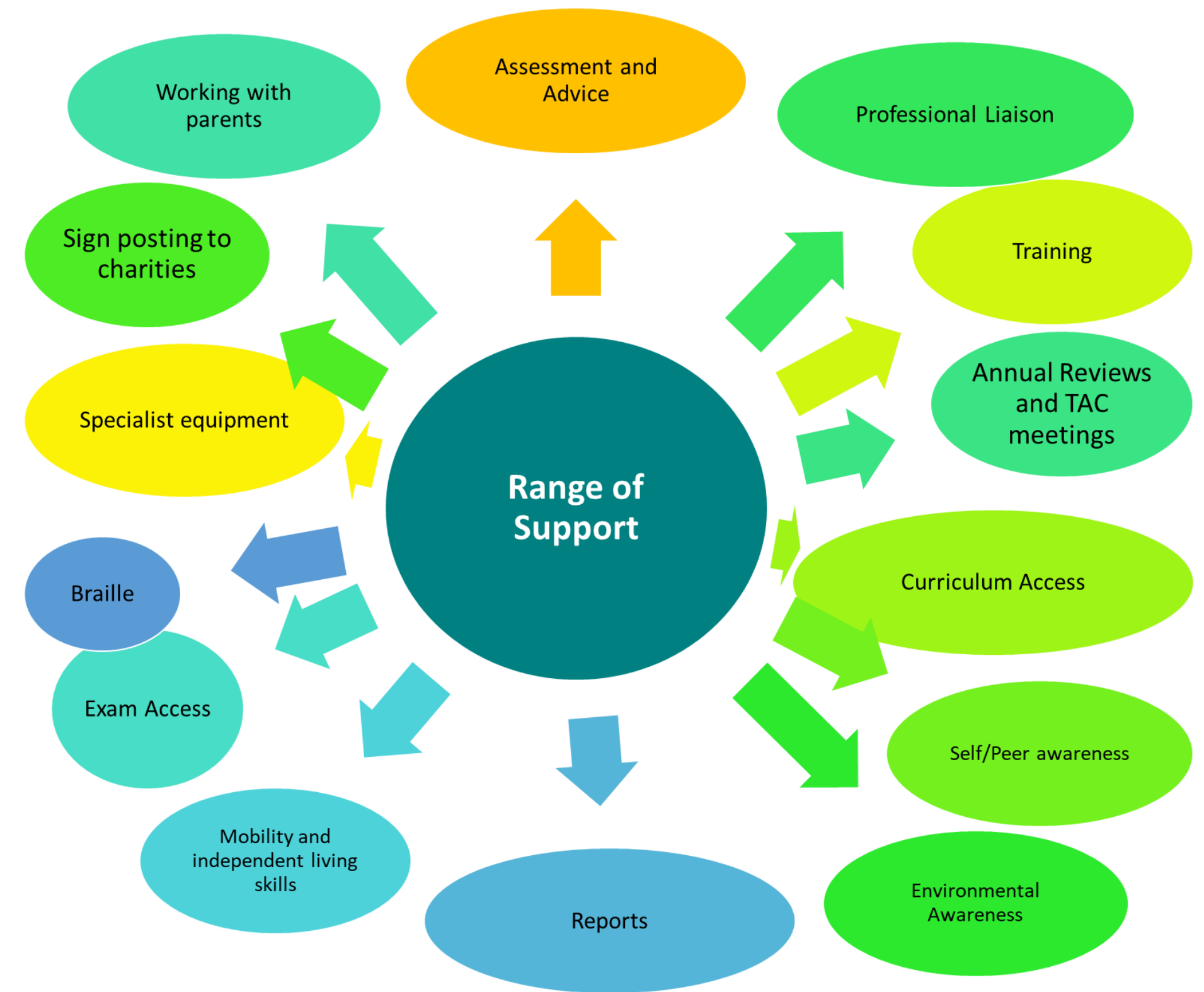
- Role of STAS
- Understanding vision (how the eye works, eye conditions)
- Understanding hearing (how the ear works, types of hearing loss)
- Implications of hearing and visual difficulties on learning and development
- Useful support strategies – small adjustments for big impact

Who are we?



What we do...

- **Support children and young people (0-25)** with diagnosed vision impairment or hearing loss that significantly affects learning and development.
- **Provide guidance from the point of diagnosis** to ensure needs are identified and met early.
- **Work across all settings** early years, schools, colleges, special schools, and home environments.
- **Assess functional vision** and contribute advice for statutory assessments for children and young people with significant vision loss.
- **Assess listening, language, and communication needs** when concerns arise, and recommend specialist equipment or strategies to support access to learning.



What is a Vision Impairment?

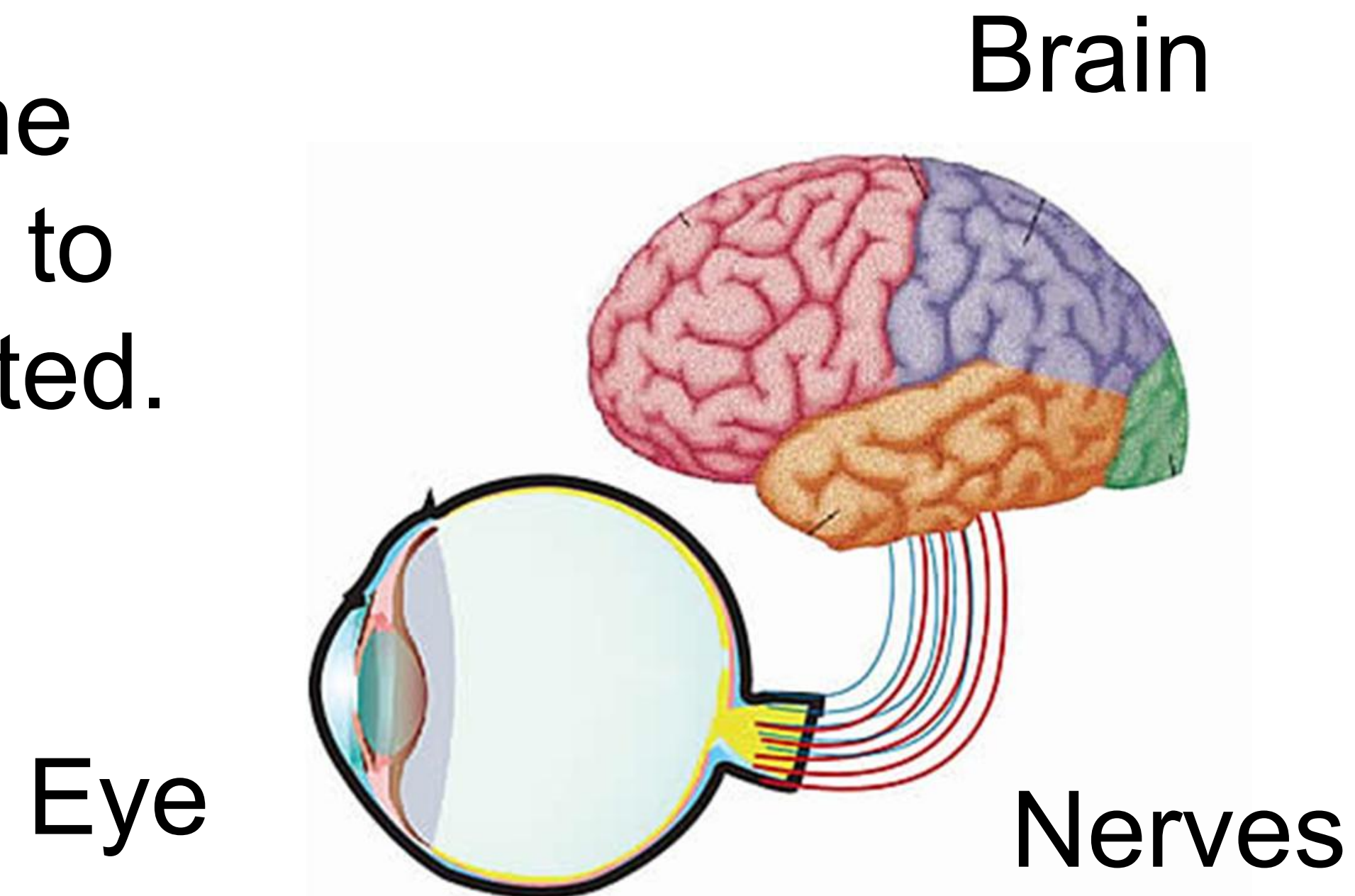
Vision impairment is when a person has sight loss that **cannot** be corrected using glasses or contact lenses.

There are two main categories of vision impairment:

- partially sighted or sight impaired – where the level of sight loss is moderate
- severe sight impairment (blindness) – where the level of sight loss is so severe that activities that rely on eyesight become impossible

The Visual Process

The three parts of the visual process need to work to be fully sighted.



Distance Vision

A visual acuity score of 6/60 means you can read 6 metres away what a fully sighted person can read from 60 metres away.

6/6 is perfect vision

6/12 or worse cannot drive

6/30 or worse meets the criteria for statutory assessment

[Bus | Visual Acuity Tool \(bayer.co.uk\)](https://www.bayer.co.uk/visual-acuity-tool)

Near Vision

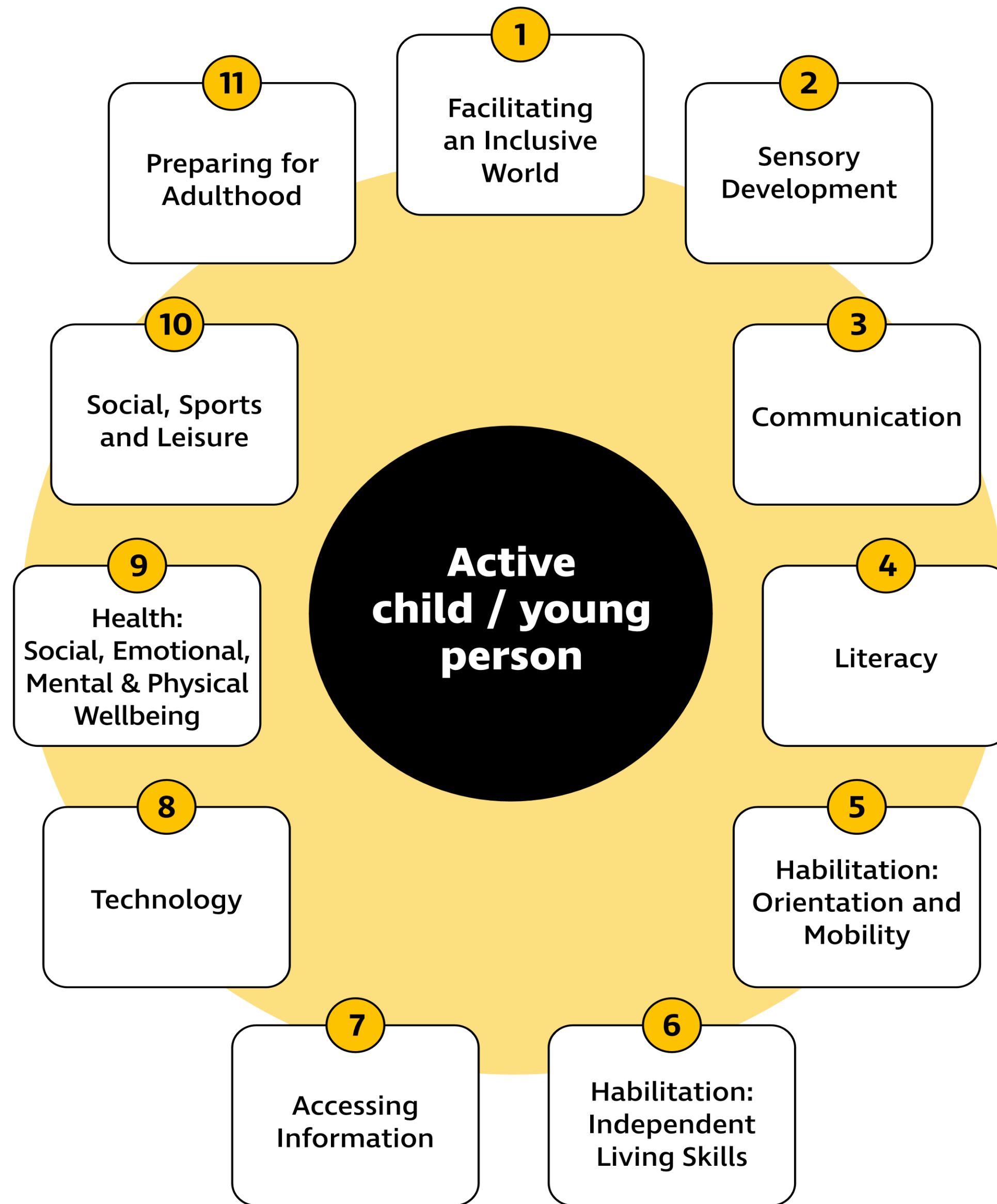
- Tested at a comfortable reading distance
- Presented with print of different sizes
- Print size is given in N
- N5 is the size of print in a newspaper
- N12 is used in STA reports

- The print size that is recommended is usually larger than the smallest print that can be physically read to ensure ease of access and to reduce visual fatigue after sustained reading.

We depend upon vision for:

- 80% of learning through visual channel
- incidental learning in and out of school
- directed learning
- developing appropriate social and behavioural skills
- making peer and adult relationships
- co-ordinating ourselves
- mobility and independence.

Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment



[Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment \(CFVI\)](#)
[| RNIB](#)

Principles of EYFS

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Key difficulties - VI

- Miss non-verbal information
- Cannot see facial expressions or what is in the environment from a distance
- May have limited life experiences
- Need real contexts and experiences
- Can be late to talk or use limited vocabulary
- Will need multisensory approach to learning letters and sounds
- Can find fast paced games challenging
- May be wary of new situations
- Need a predictable environment to navigate safely
- May require extra support with self-care
- May be tactile selective

Communication and Language - VI

Simple Adjustments & Strategies

- Say the child's name before speaking to them.
- Provide a verbal commentary/narration of what is happening in the distance.
- Get down to child's eye level when speaking to them, but bear in mind that they may find it difficult to give eye contact.
- Provide repetition and clarification of instructions, vocabulary, and new concepts.
- Offer hands-on experiences with objects to build child's understanding of concepts and vocabulary.
- Use objects of reference or clear, simple images to support child's understanding of daily routines and language.
- All visual resources should be BIG, BOLD and CLEAR. Declutter and keep simple.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - VI

Impact on PSED

- Can prefer adult company
- May find it hard to find friends
- Can find managing their feelings difficult

Simple Adjustments & Strategies

- Use high visibility jackets, caps or agreed meeting places to help child find their friends at outside at playtime.
- Encourage and model peer interaction, shared play and turn taking. Describe what the other children are doing and model positive interactions with them.
- Verbalise emotions to ensure social interactions are understood.
- Celebrate successes and help child to recognise when they are doing something well.
- Consider visual fatigue when planning child's day and when responding to any frustration or demotivated behaviour.
- Establish a clear routine with auditory clues such as tidy up music.

Real Objects



Messy Play Texture Hierarchy

Easy	Challenging		
<p>Dry textures fall away and the child can control contact with the texture.</p>	<p>Dry textures that mostly fall away, some particles or bits may stick to the hand.</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand but the child can easily break contact with the texture (e.g. by lightly wiping)</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand and the child has least control when breaking contact with the texture (e.g. by repeatedly wiping).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feathers ▪ Shredded paper ▪ Dry Pasta / spaghetti ▪ Dry Rice ▪ Dry porridge oats ▪ String ▪ Lace ▪ Fabric squares ▪ Fur fabric ▪ Dry sand ▪ Beads ▪ Plastic items ▪ Sea shells ▪ Coconut husks ▪ Dry lentils / beans ▪ Dried flowers ▪ Hay / straw ▪ Leaves ▪ Cotton wool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Damp Sand ▪ Glitter ▪ Sequins ▪ Touching mixture of corn flour mixed with water. ▪ Cold wet pasta / spaghetti ▪ Wet rice ▪ Silly string ▪ Chalks ▪ Playdough ▪ Compost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foam (e.g. light shaving foam) ▪ Water ▪ Wet sand ▪ Wet noodles ▪ Wet lentils ▪ Baked beans ▪ Jelly ▪ Mashed potato ▪ Ice cubes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foam (e.g. heavy shaving foam) ▪ Glue ▪ Melted chocolate ▪ Mashed banana ▪ Dripping mixture of corn flour mixed with water on the skin ▪ Mud ▪ Angel delight ▪ Porridge ▪ Custard ▪ Yoghurt ▪ Ice cream ▪ Finger Paint / poster paint ▪ Tinned Spaghetti <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">Items may also include additional properties at this end of the scale (e.g. ice cream is wet, sticky and cold)</p>

Environmental considerations

- Ensure clear access to child's coat peg, toilets and other communal areas. Regularly check for obstacles and trip hazards.
- Placement of coat pegs, bags etc. should be positioned on an end making it easier for the pupil to locate independently.
- Create a safe learning environment and allow X to explore each area – keep changes minimal.
- Make child aware of any changes in the environment.
- Bright orange tape can be used to identify coat peg, water bottle plus any hazards such as edges of furniture.
- Offer close support in physical activities and other practical tasks to ensure child's safety.
- Be aware of glare and bright light as this can affect vision and cause discomfort.
- Carry out an audit of the visual environment and consider adaptations that might be made. Refer to [environmental-questionnaire.pdf](#)

Signposting (VI)

Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) |
RNIB

RNIB Guidance on Early Years

Learning Through Play | Support for Children | Guide Dogs

Home | STAS and E&I Therapy

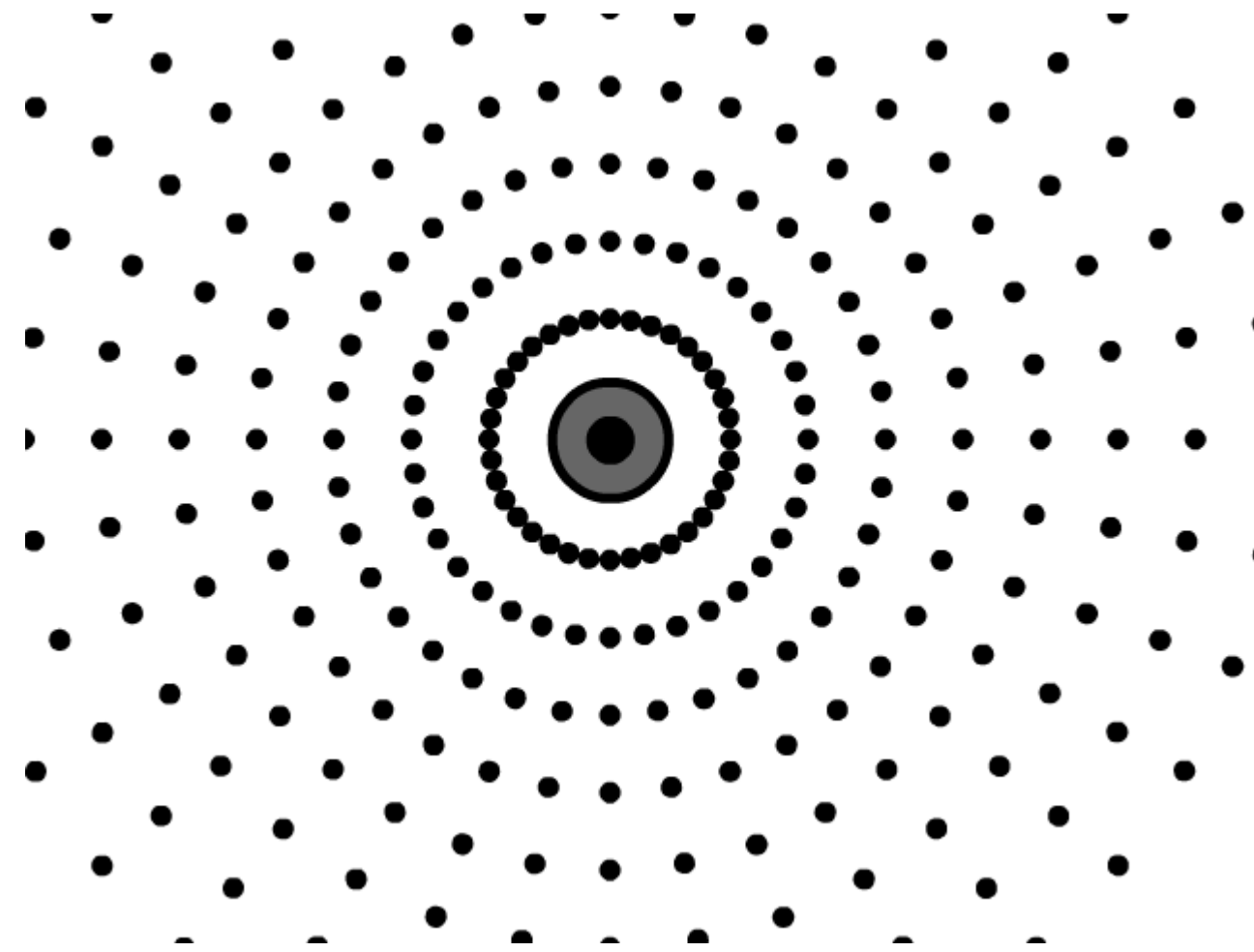
Specialist Teacher Advisory Service | Education and learning | Hampshire County
Council

What is sound?

Sound comes from a source and travels in all directions.

It is a vibration – it travels through objects and through the air.

The more energy in the vibration, the louder the sound (dB).

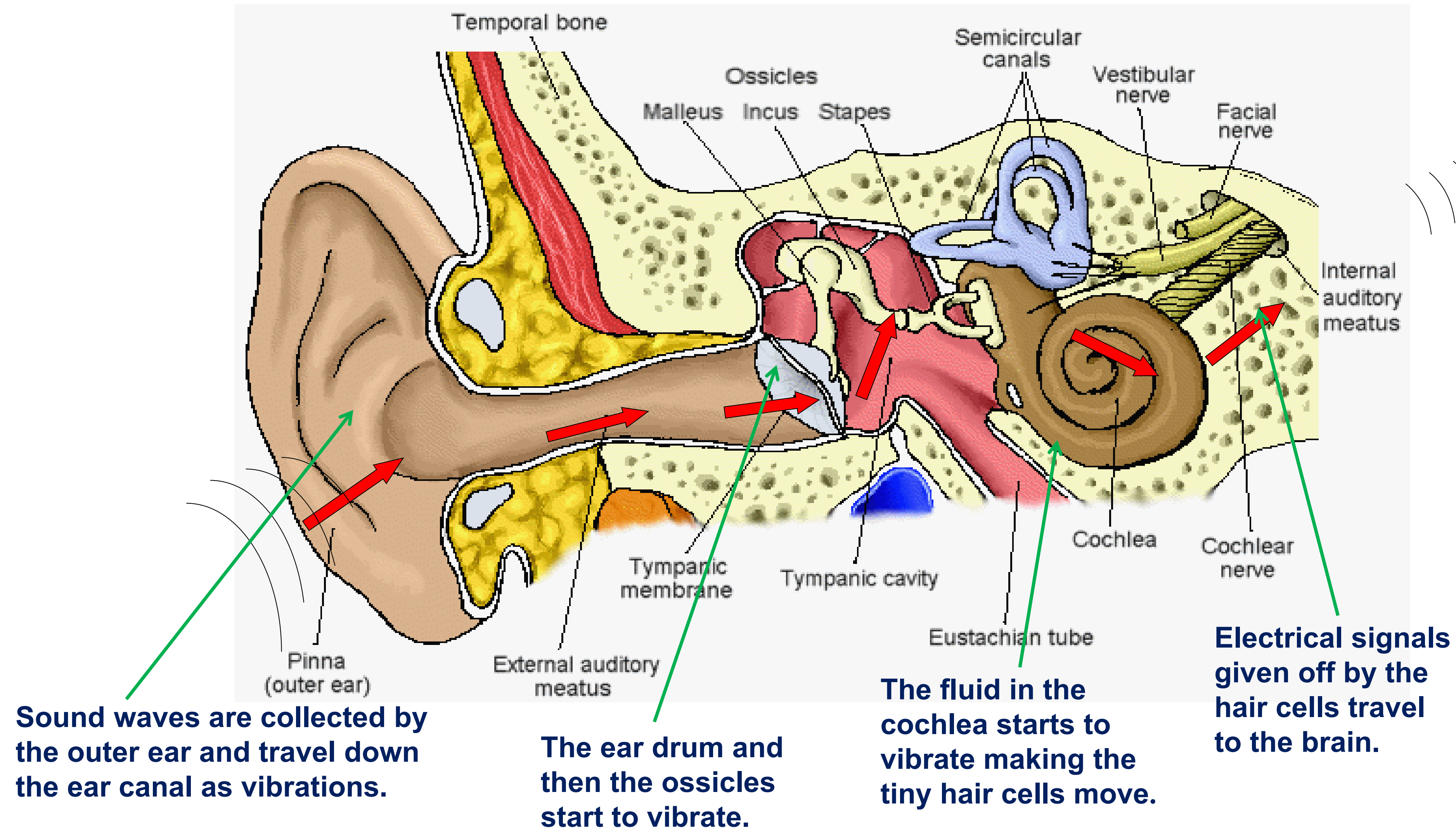


The faster the vibration, the higher the pitch (Hz).

Sound reflects from surfaces hard surfaces and is absorbed by soft surfaces.

The further you are from the sound source, the less energy the vibration has, so the quieter it is.

How We Hear Sounds

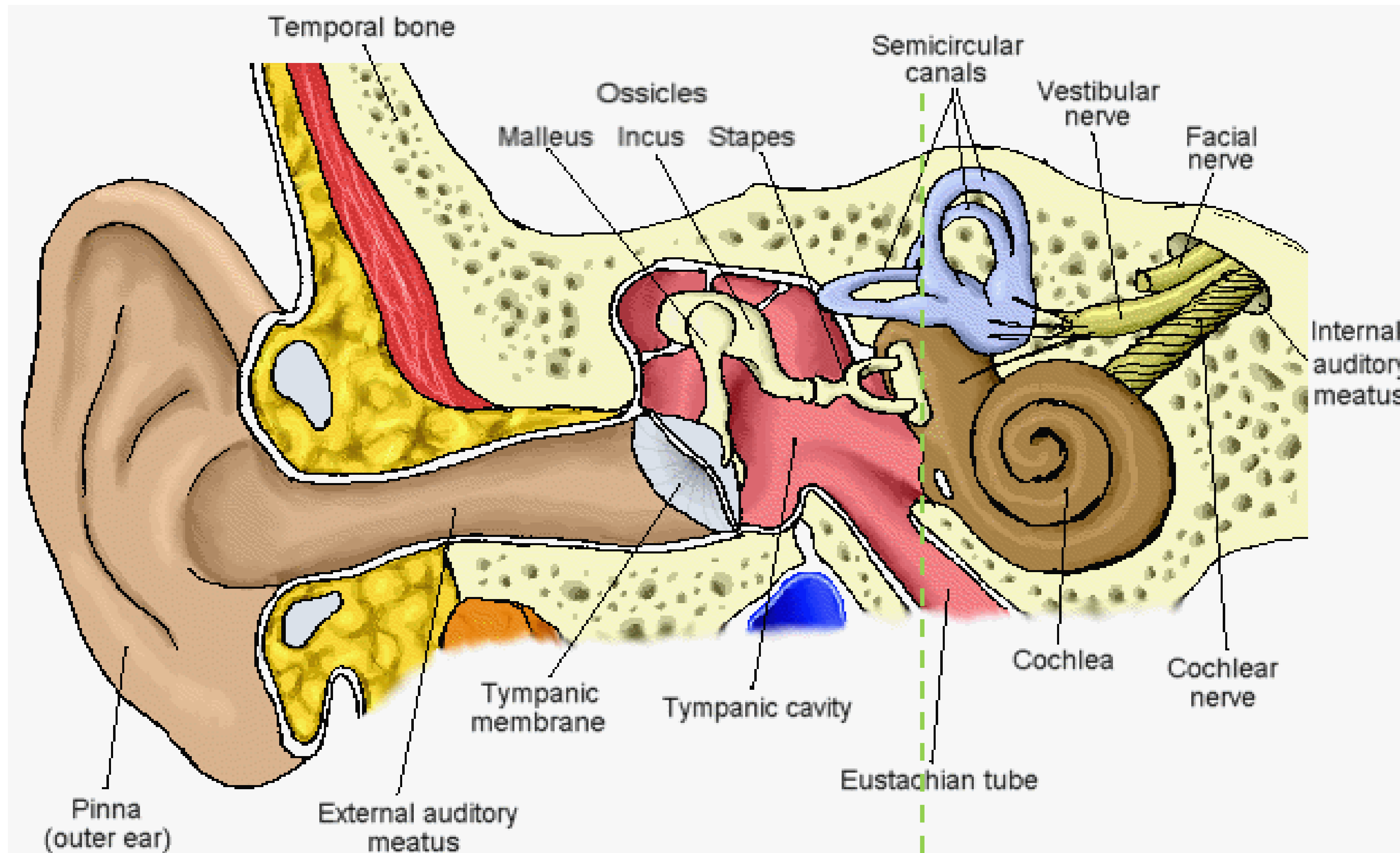


Types of hearing loss



- Conductive
- Sensori-neural
- Mixed loss

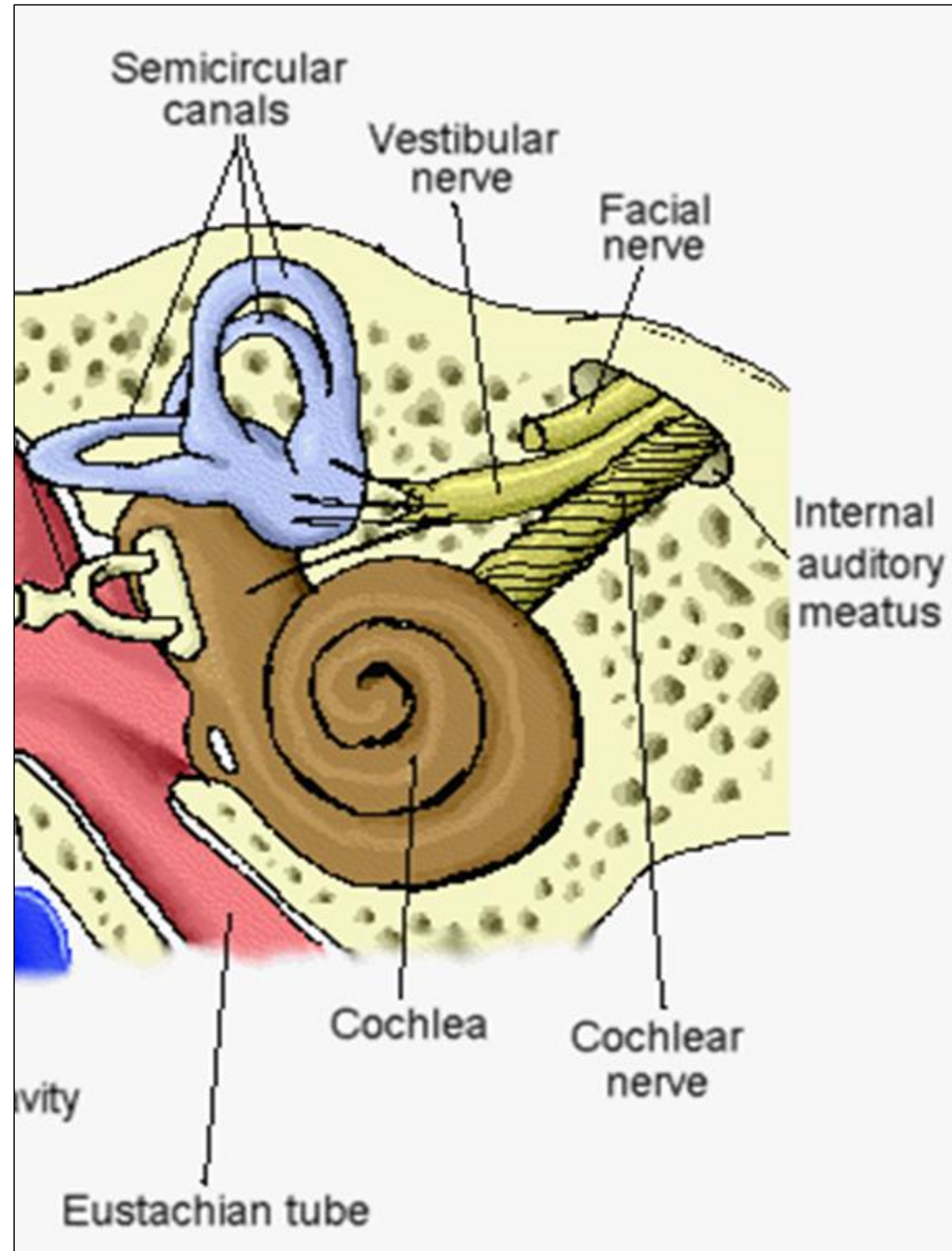
Can affect both ears (bilateral) or just one ear (unilateral)



Conductive loss

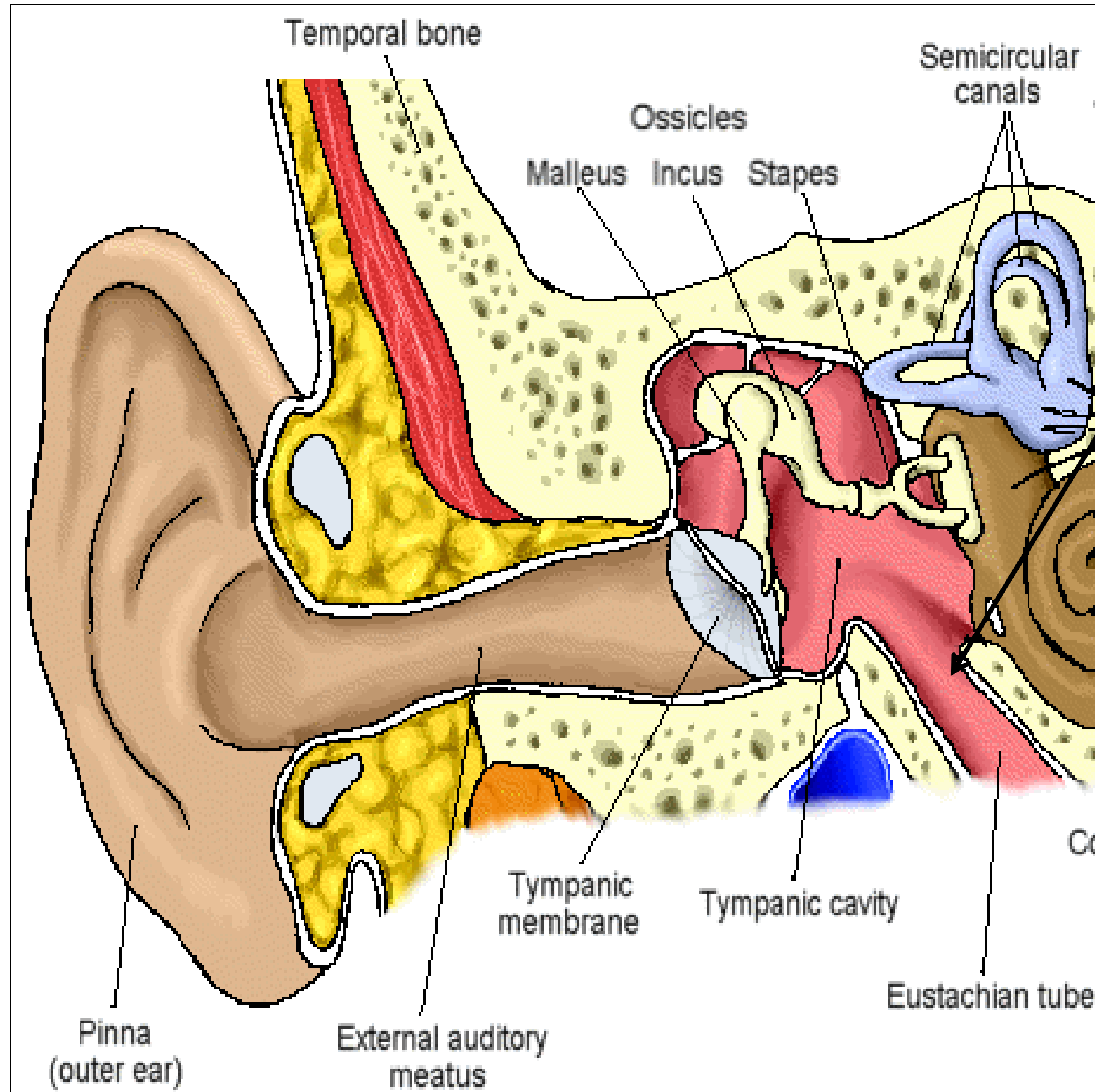
Sensori-neural loss

Sensori-neural hearing loss



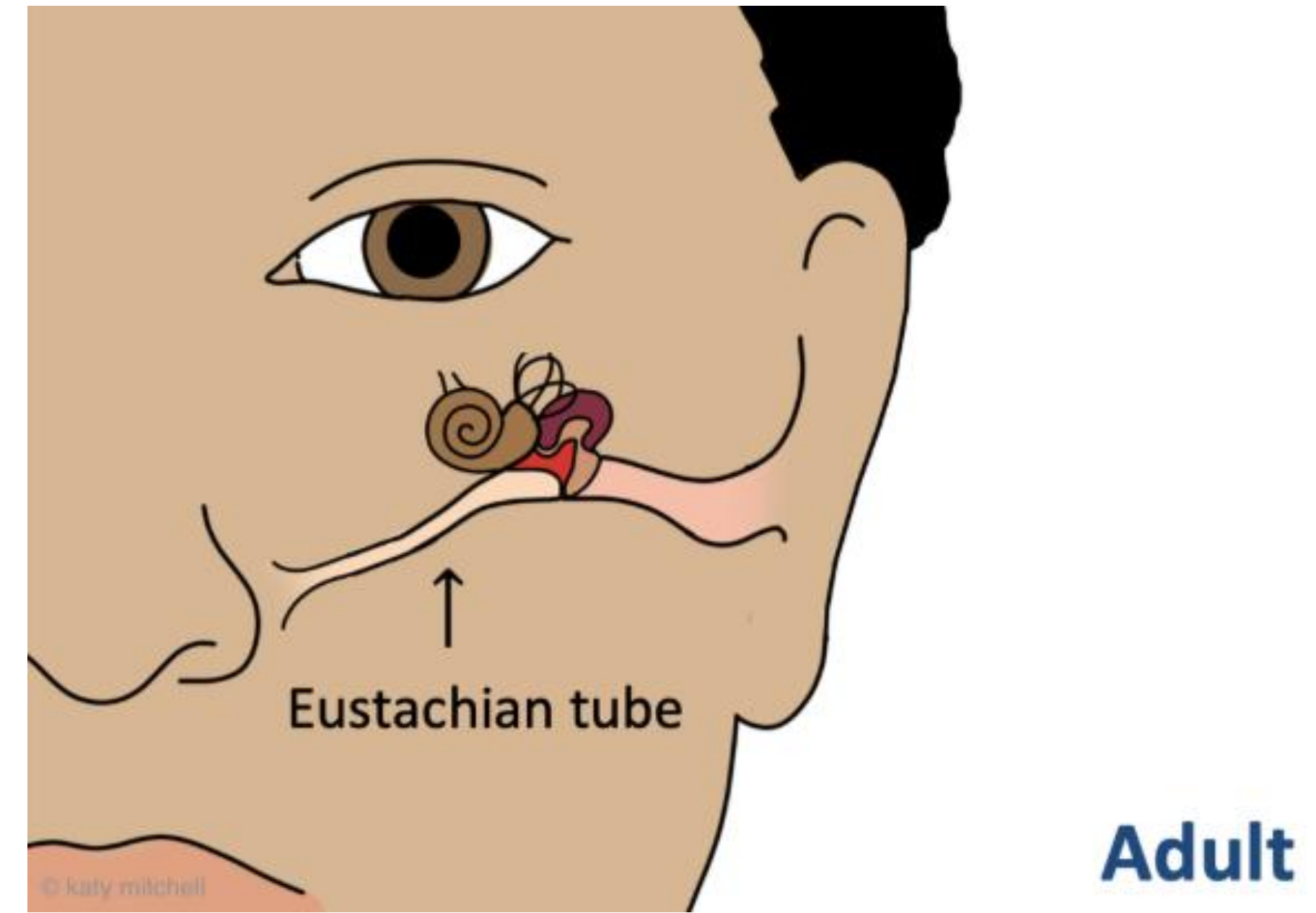
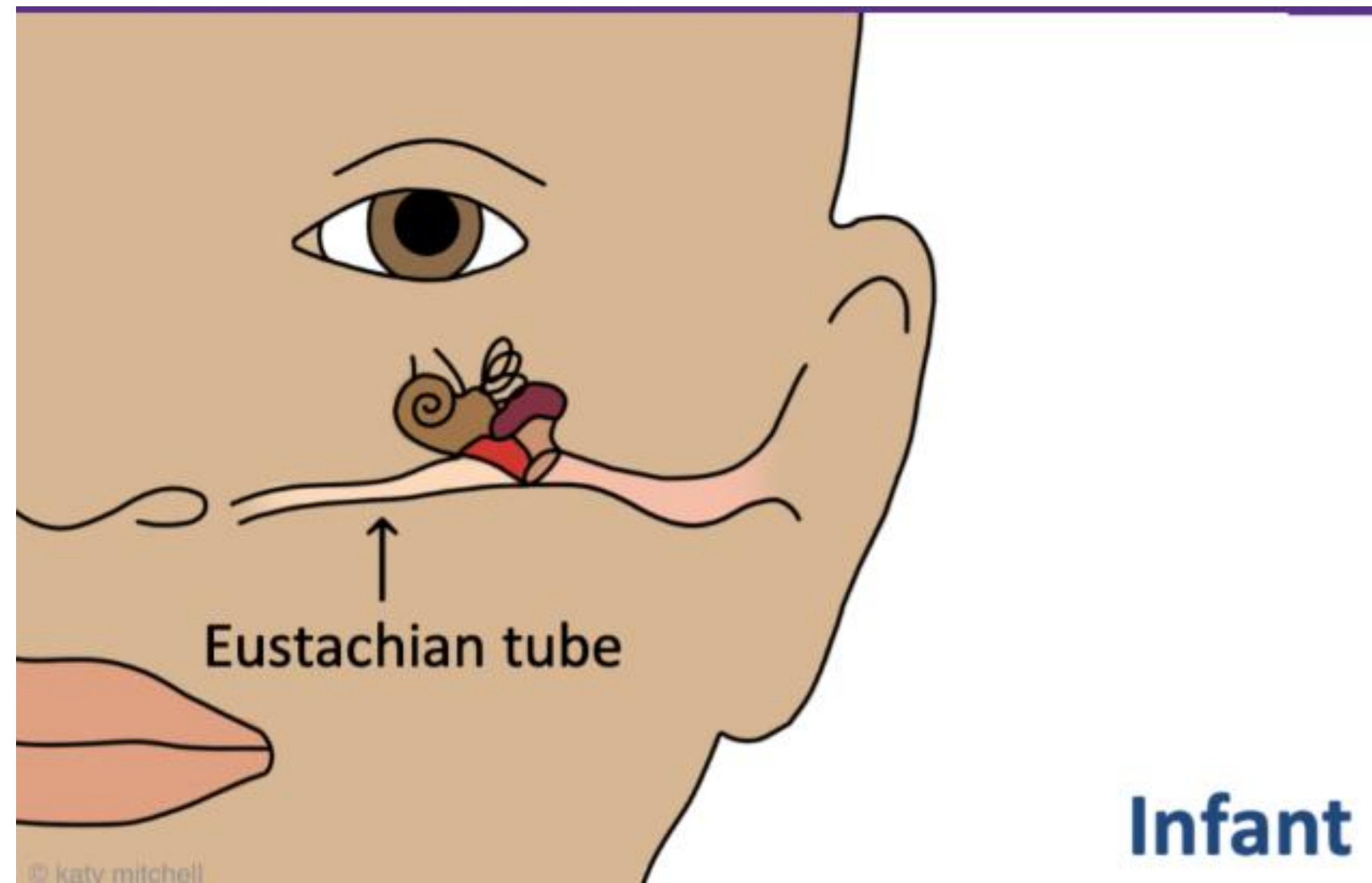
- Permanent hearing loss
- Damage to the inner ear hair cells or the auditory nerve
- Can affect different frequencies of sound and difficulty hearing different parts of speech
- Can have a genetic cause, infection/illness, effect of ototoxic drugs, loud noise

Conductive - Glue Ear

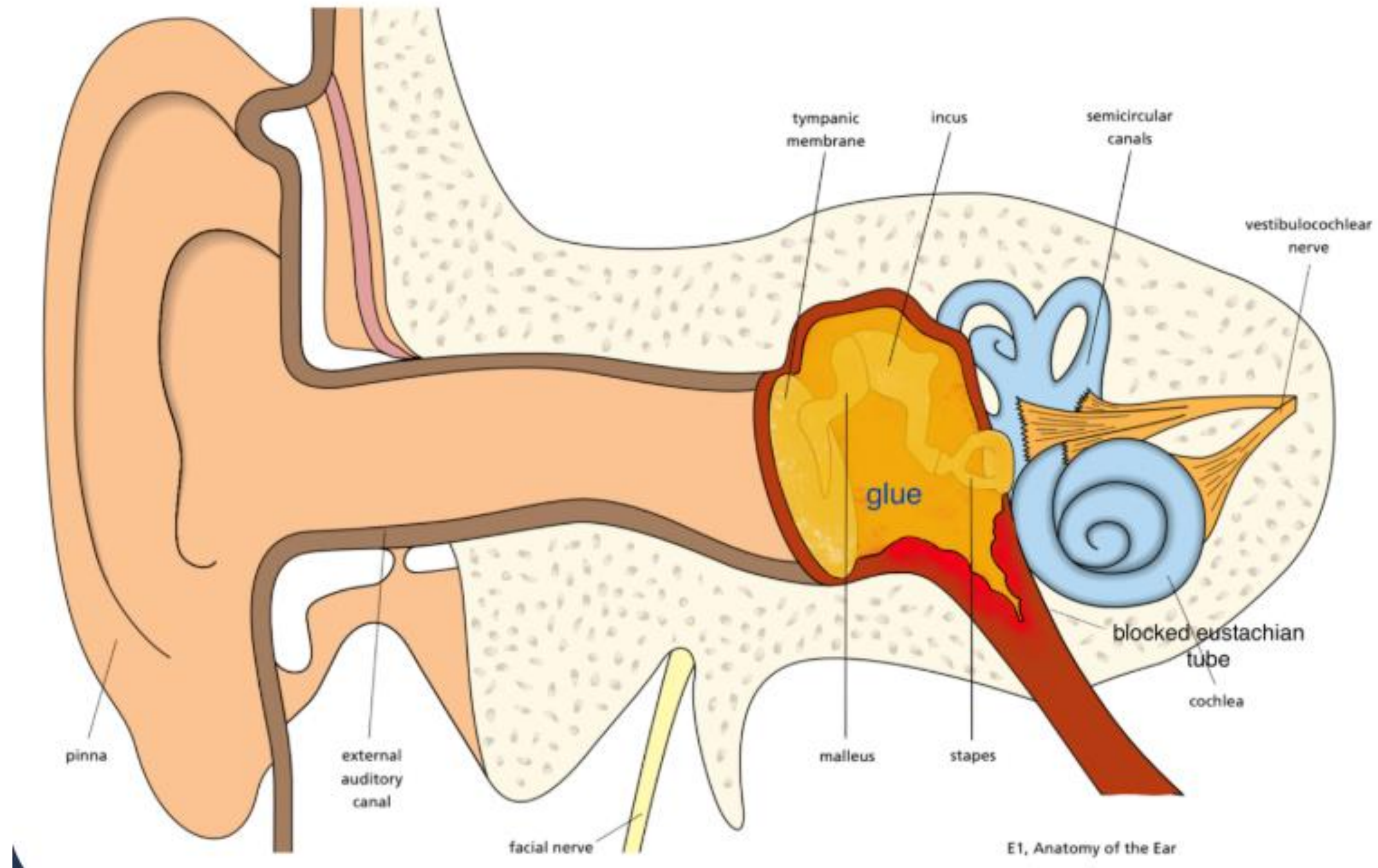


- Middle ear needs air – eustachian tube
- In children this tube can get easily blocked because it is narrow and straight e.g. a common cold
- The lining of the cavity produces fluid that thickens (glue ear) because the air flow is restricted
- It is hard for sound to pass through

Glue ear/Eustachian tube



Glue ear



Medical approach

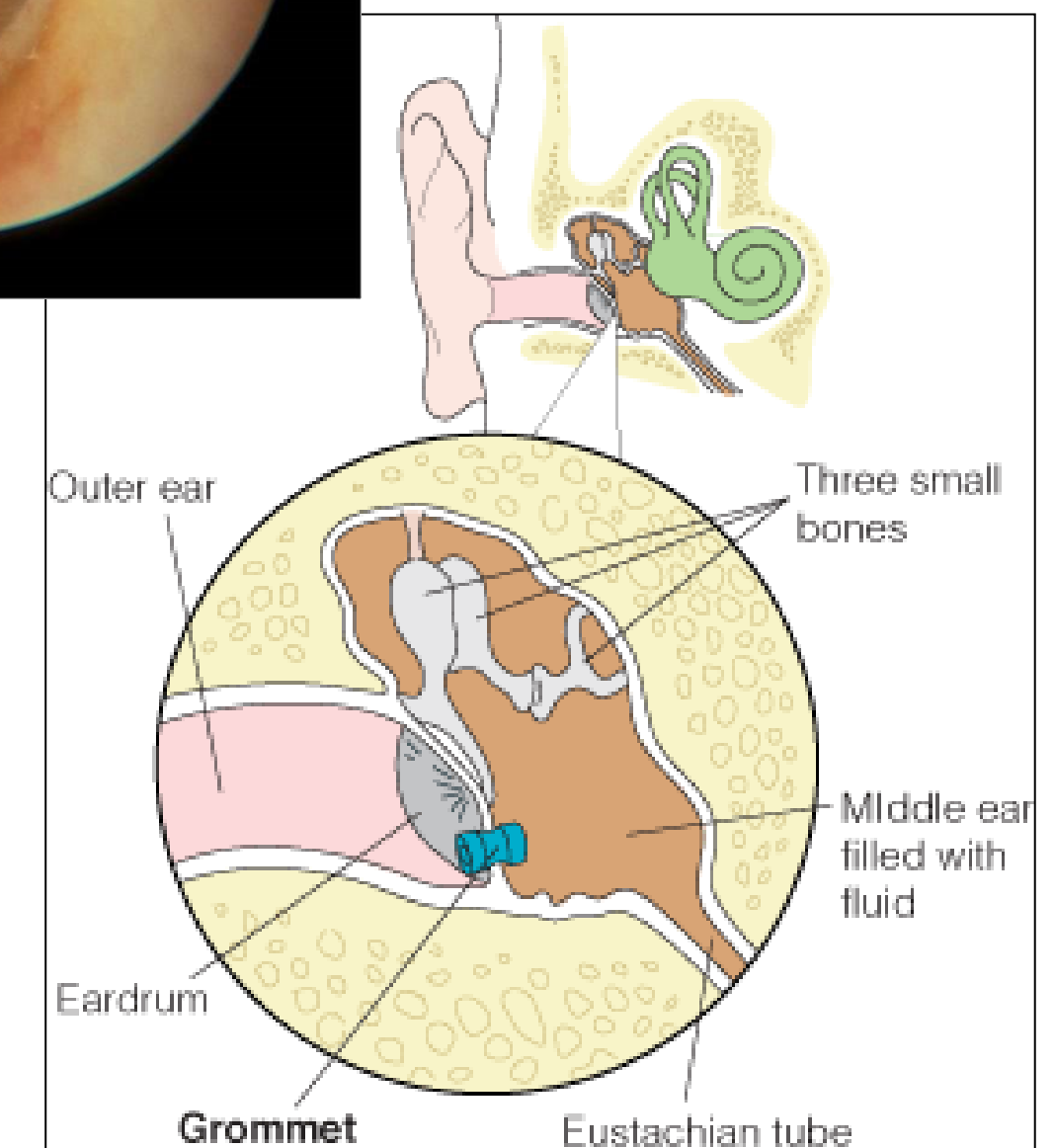
“Watchful waiting”



Hearing aid trial



Insertion of grommet



Equipment checking

- Why?
- What/How?
- Who?

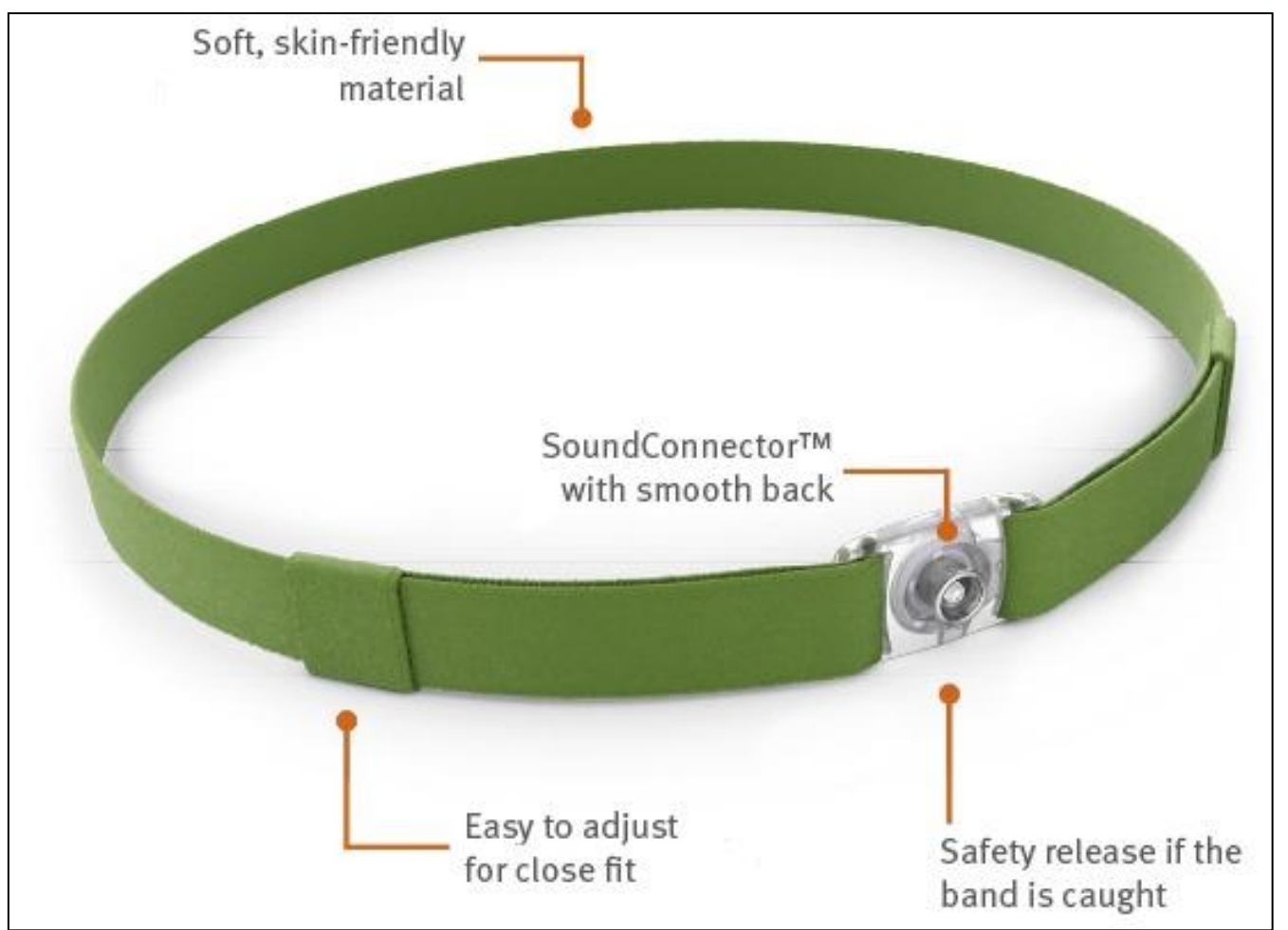


Oticon Ponto Pro Headband Hearing Aid



Soft headband

Wireless sound processor



Battery compartment

Unilateral hearing loss

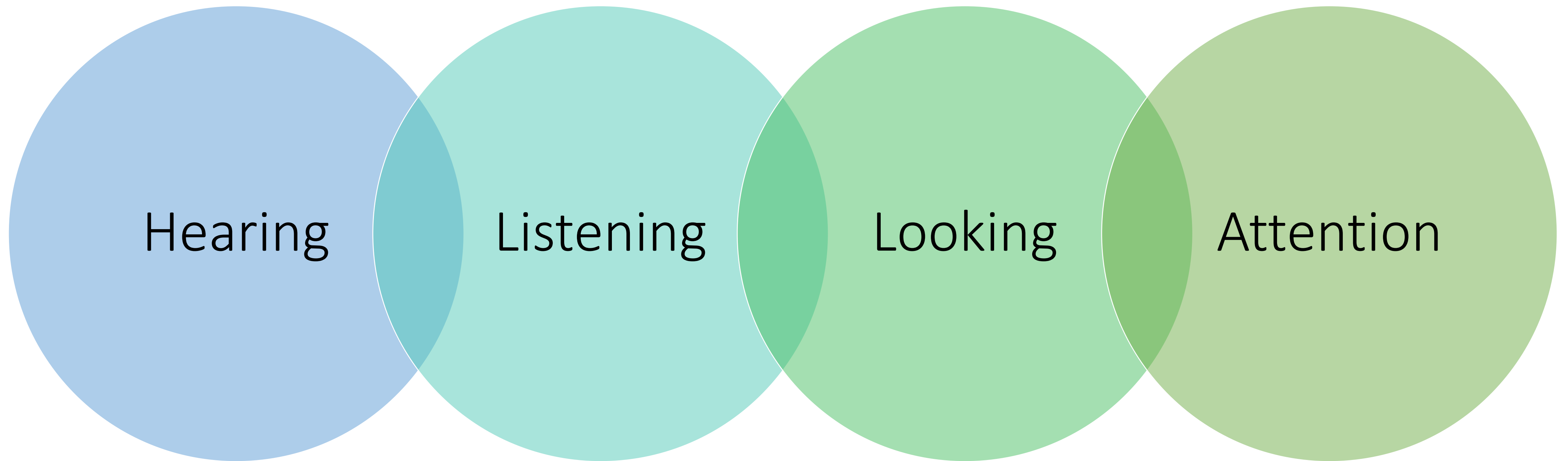
- Hearing loss in one ear only, the other ear hears within normal limits.
- Can be mild, moderate, severe, or profound in the affected ear.
- Children may still respond to sound but miss speech or environmental cues coming from their weaker side.

What impact does it have?

- Difficulty locating the direction of sounds.
- Challenges hearing in noisy environments.
- Missing information during group play or circle time.
- Increased listening effort → fatigue.



Building blocks of Communication and Language



Key difficulties- DHH

- Reduced access to clear sound & spoken language affects vocabulary growth and speech clarity (detecting and discriminating sounds).
- Children may miss incidental learning (overheard conversations, environmental sounds) which can impact social learning, peer bonding and vocabulary.
- Difficulty following group discussions, story time, or fast-paced talk.
- May rely more on visual cues, gestures, and routines.
- Children may appear withdrawn or unsure in group play due to missed cues.
- Possible frustration when communication breaks down.
- May rely heavily on familiar adults for security.
- May function well on a 1:1 basis in quiet but the addition of background noise will inhibit access to sound.
- More explicit teaching for vocabulary and repetition.
- The process of attending, interpreting, and responding is harder. Listening effort is significantly increased, mental fatigue.

Communication and Language- DHH

Simple Adjustments & Strategies

- Gain the child's attention before speaking (say their name, tap gently, use a visual cue). Consider seating position close to the speaker.
- Reduce background noise where possible; use soft furnishings to improve acoustics.
- Ensure clear visibility of your face for lip-reading and expression.
- Use short, clear sentences (allow processing time).
- Provide visual supports (objects of reference, pictures, gestures, signing).
- Repeat or rephrase contributions from peers.
- Pair new vocabulary with gesture/action or visuals/real object.
- Check understanding naturally – show me... tell me... what comes next...
- Provide a commentary/narration of the child's play

Personal, Social & Mental Health

Simple Adjustments & Strategies

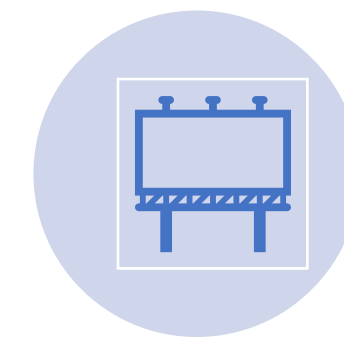
- Support peer interactions with modelling and gentle facilitation, teach peers how to engage inclusively (e.g. getting attention).
- Verbalise emotions to help them understand social interactions and social cues.
- Use name cues and visual signals in group activities to help inclusion.
- Provide predictable routines to reduce anxiety.
- Encourage turn-taking with clear visual or signed prompts.
- Offer explicit teaching of social language (greetings, sharing, emotions, turn-taking).
- Create quiet spaces where the child can interact without auditory overload.

Environmental considerations

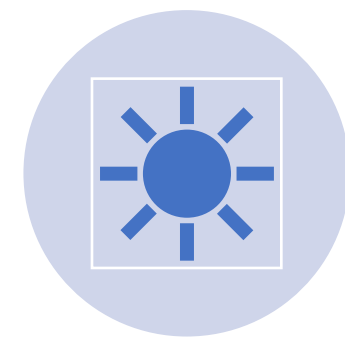
Be aware that a good listening environment is one in which there are curtains, soft blinds, and carpets to absorb ambient noise.



Tablecloths



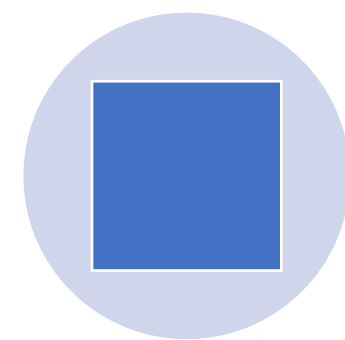
Displays (use of felt/hessian)



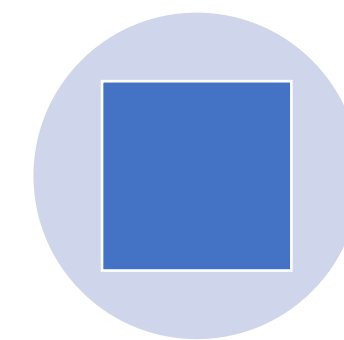
Ensure the lighting is good.



Keep away from open windows and open doors when you are talking



Zone areas to create pockets of quieter areas



If you have access to a 'quiet area', consider when it would be useful to work there

Signposting (DHH)

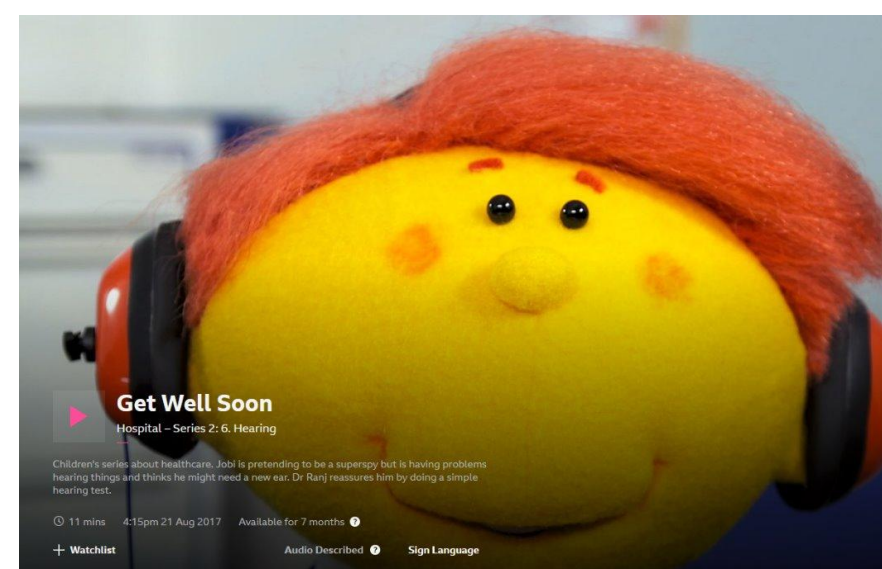
Glue ear:-

[Understanding glue ear in children and temporary deafness](#)



Ninja Phoenix and DJ and The Gloopy Glop

[The Gloopy Glop](#)



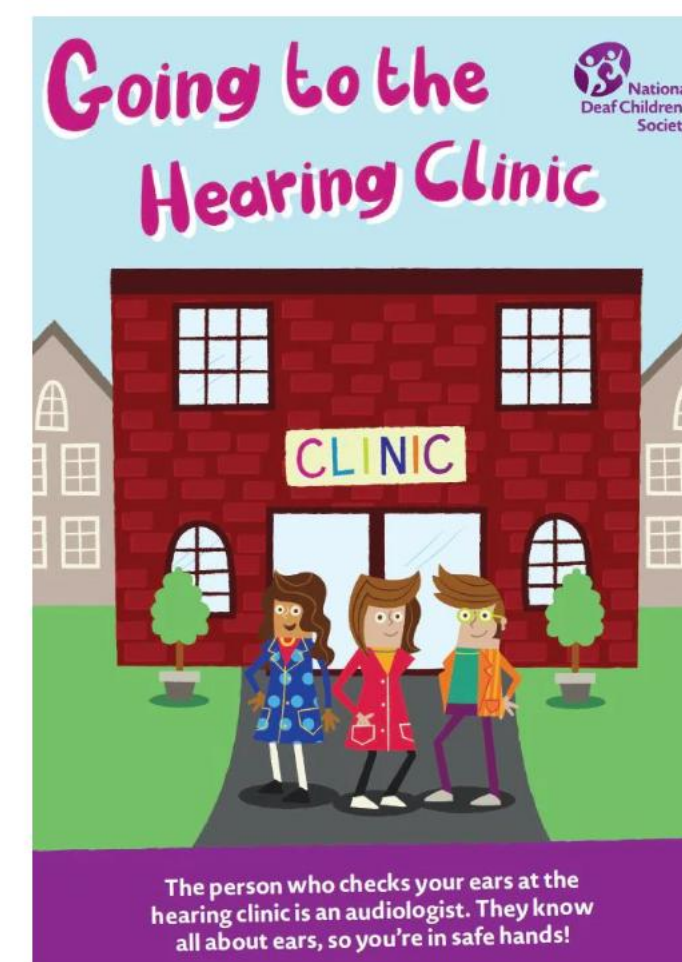
[Get Well Soon - Hospital – Series 2: 6. Hearing - BBC iPlayer](#)

Deaf awareness: -

[My deaf child and going to nursery: deaf awareness tips \(You Tube\)](#)

[What different levels of hearing loss sound like \(You Tube\)](#)

Online books:



[Going to the hearing clinic – NDCS Bookshop](#)



[E0024 Comic Harvey Gets Grommets.pdf](#)

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Engagement

- Children with hearing or vision loss may miss important cues that spark curiosity.
- Reduced access to sound or visual information can make new activities feel unpredictable, leading to less spontaneous exploration.
- They may need richer sensory experiences, clear visual/auditory prompts, and supported opportunities to join play.

Motivation

- Sensory effort is tiring; children may need more energy just to listen or look.
- Fatigue or frustration can reduce persistence with tasks.
- Consistent routines, meaningful adult interactions, and adapted resources help maintain motivation.

Thinking

- Limited incidental learning affects how children make links, solve problems, and understand cause and effect.
- They may need more explicit teaching, repetition, and opportunities to practise skills in different contexts.
- Providing hands-on experiences and modelling problem-solving supports deeper understanding.



Thank you for listening.

Any questions?



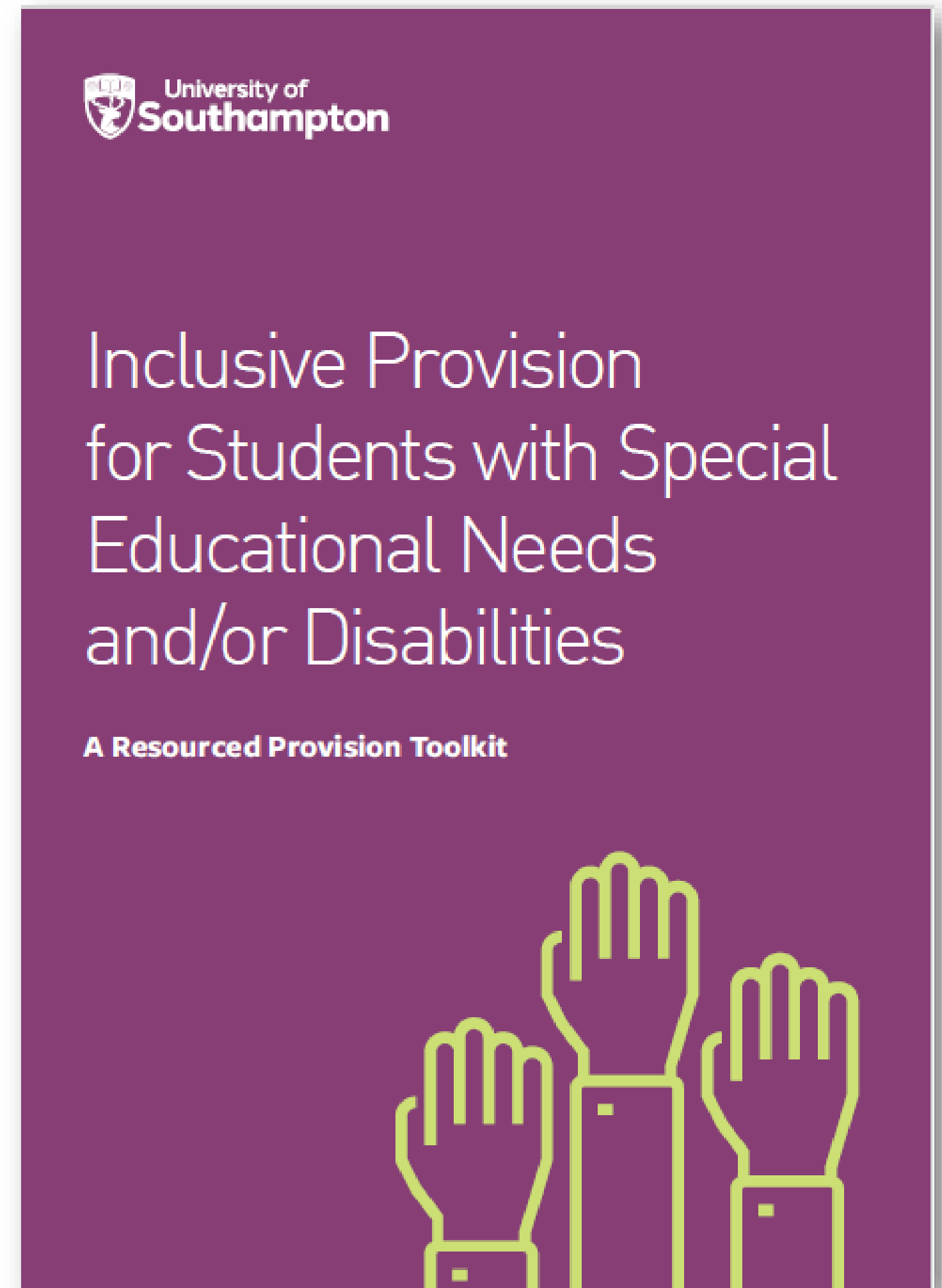
Resourced Provision Toolkit

Working together to look at a section of the toolkit.

We are looking at the section on:

‘Student relationships and friendships’

[Resourced Provision Toolkit](#)



AREA 7

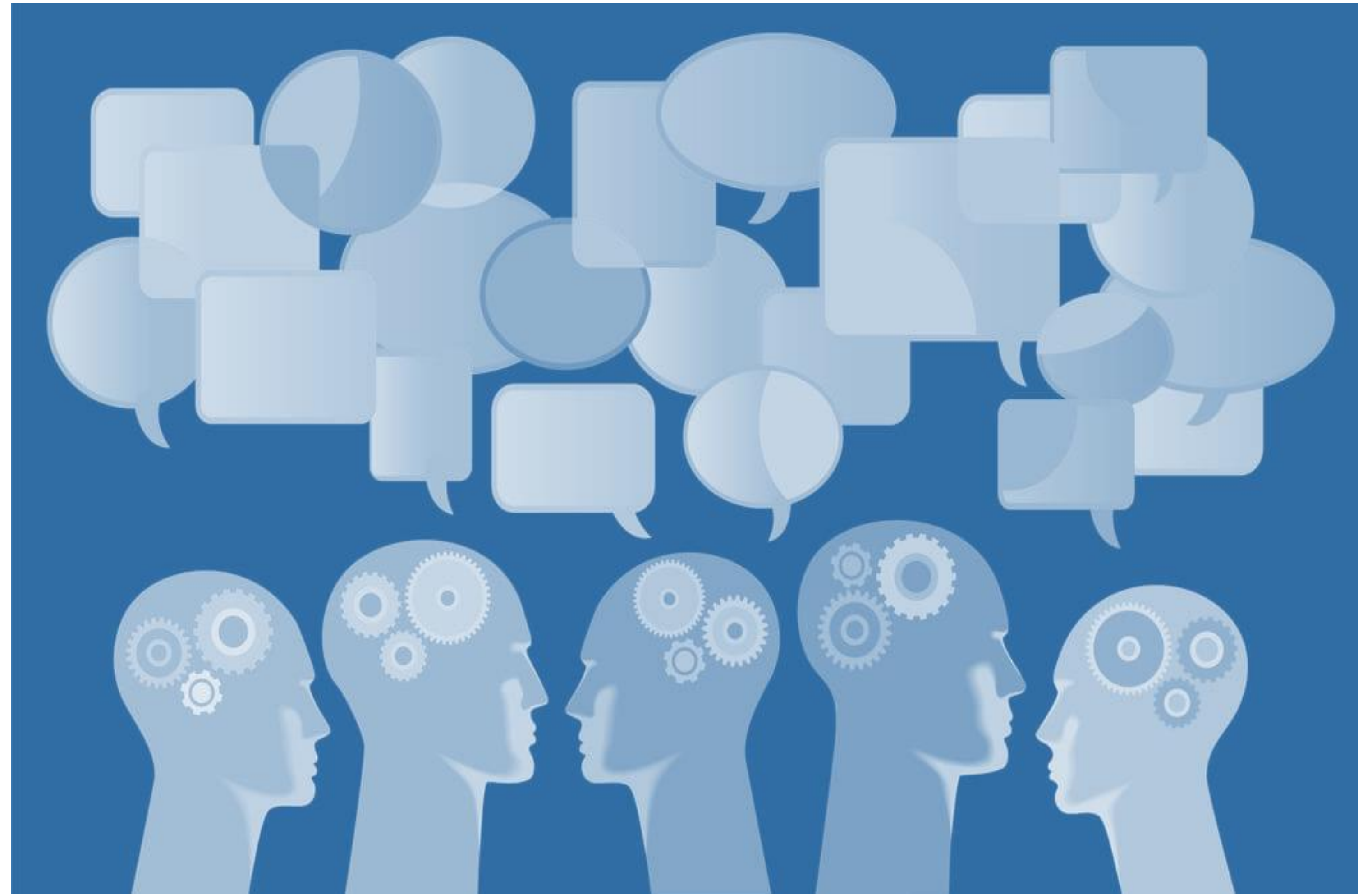
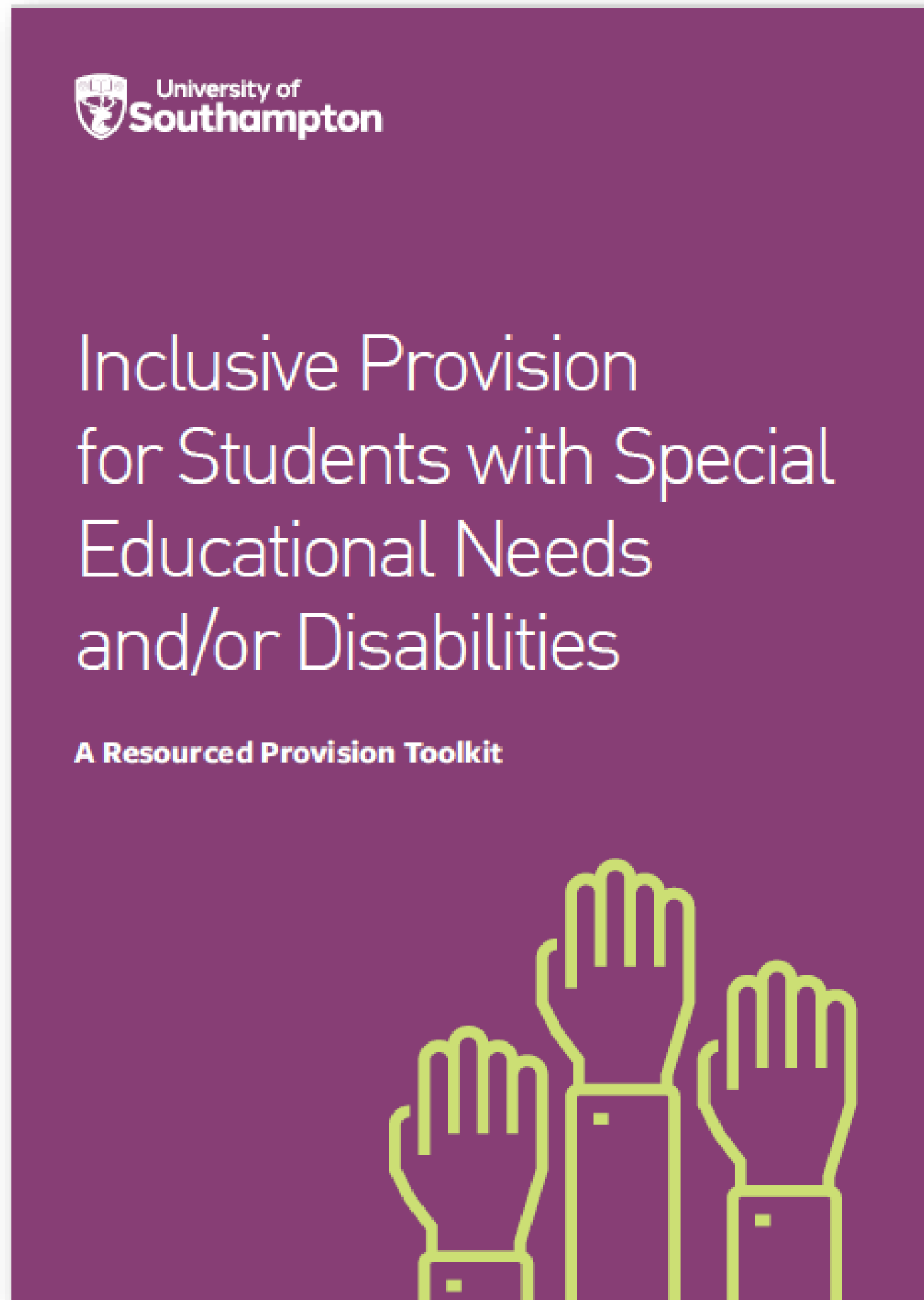
Student relationships and friendships

	ACHIEVED	WORKING TOWARDS	NEED TO INITIATE
7a. All students from the RP have the opportunity to develop interactions with mainstream students to enhance their social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7b. Students from the RP are given opportunities for social interactions with other peers in the mainstream classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7c. Teach mainstream students to treat students from the RP as equal peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7d. Educate all students about differences and diversity to develop an ethos of respect and understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>


How do you support your RP children in developing friendships within the mainstream classroom?


How do you include teaching all children about differences and diversity within your curriculum?

Resourced Provision Toolkit – sharing




Ordinarily Available Provision 'How to guide'

 Hampshire County Council
Early Years and Children's Training and Support



Ordinarily Available Provision in EYFS
A how-to-guide to implementation

 Hampshire County Council
Services for Young Children Early Years Advisory



Heuristic and Natural Materials
Open-ended, sensory-rich resources like wooden objects, fabric, and natural items encourage exploration and decision-making.

Open Shelving and Low Tabletops
Materials are displayed openly to encourage standing, reaching, and choice-making, supporting both physical and cognitive development.

Ground Level Resources
Placing resources at children's level empowers them to independently access what they need, encouraging choice-making, fostering autonomy, and building a sense of accomplishment as they plan and carry out their own activities.

What would this look like for Pre School and Year R?

- Child-Height Shelving and Furniture
- Open-Ended Resources
- Clearly Labelled Storage
- Resources are clearly displayed and visible to children
- Self-Service Stations
- Accessible and inclusive tools/resources

Self-Service Stations
Make sure items like tissues, water, and coats are within easy reach. This empowers children to meet their own needs and builds self-reliance.

Design with the Child's Perspective in Mind
Position furniture and resources at children's eye level to promote independence, self-selection, and active exploration. Consider what children can see, reach, and access on their own in each area of the environment.

SEN Support Guidance for Early Years Providers
September 2024



 Hampshire County Council
Improvement and Advisory Service

OAP and SEND support

Ordinarily available provision and special educational needs and disabilities support guidance



Ordinarily Available Provision in EYFS - a how-to guide to implementation

Communication Friendly Environments

Communication and Language

What does the statutory guidance say?

Building blocks of communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questions that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary language structures." (Educational Programme for Communication and Language – Page 16)

How does this link to our Ordinarily Available Provision?

"Supporting children to become better communicators is one of the most powerful things early years educators. Oral language skills are fundamental to children's learning, think emotional wellbeing. Children who can communicate well can make friends, play, resolve and tell us how they are feeling. In the short term, children who are better communicators become better readers. In the longer term, they go on to achieve better exam results and are more likely to gain higher-paid employment as adults (Shuey and Kankar (The ShREC approach | EEF))

Interactions in the early years are vital for developing children's communication, language and social skills. From birth, babies seek connection, and meaningful conversations with which helps them thrive. When adults respond to children's interests with enthusiasm language growth and emotional bonding. These interactions also help children build friendships, empathy, and the ability to share emotions. It is important for all practitioners to know what makes a high-quality interaction and how to support children with speech and language difficulties. Ensuring practitioners understand what typical child development looks in this area, is key to ensuring children receive timely and targeted speech and language support should they need it.

'Every interaction is an interaction'

What is it?
A communication-friendly environment is one that actively supports and nurtures every child's speech, language, and communication skills, regardless of their stage of development. It ensures that communication is thoughtfully planned for and consistently supported throughout the day, creating opportunities for all children to express themselves, connect with others, and thrive. This covers three aspects: **The physical environment;** **the strategies that adults use;** **the opportunities that children have to practise their communication skills.**

Why?
A communication-friendly environment supports and nurtures children's ability to focus, understand, and express themselves during everyday activities. It offers a variety of ways for children to communicate, tailored to their individual stage of development, whether through speech, gestures, signs, visuals, or other tools. Creating such an environment is essential because strong communication skills are the foundation for learning, social interaction, and emotional wellbeing.

How can it help?
When children feel understood and are given the means to express themselves, they are more confident, engaged, and ready to explore the world around them. This inclusive approach ensures that every child has a voice and can participate fully in their learning journey. Listen to a member of the Early Years Advisory Team Communication, Language and Literacy strategic group, talk about why communication friendly environments are so important and some key elements of these.

Communication Friendly Environments
Ordinarily Available Provision
Services for Young Children

Click on the image to play the video

Children's Services

Top Tips for Quality interactions

Ordinarily Available Provision



Services for Young Children

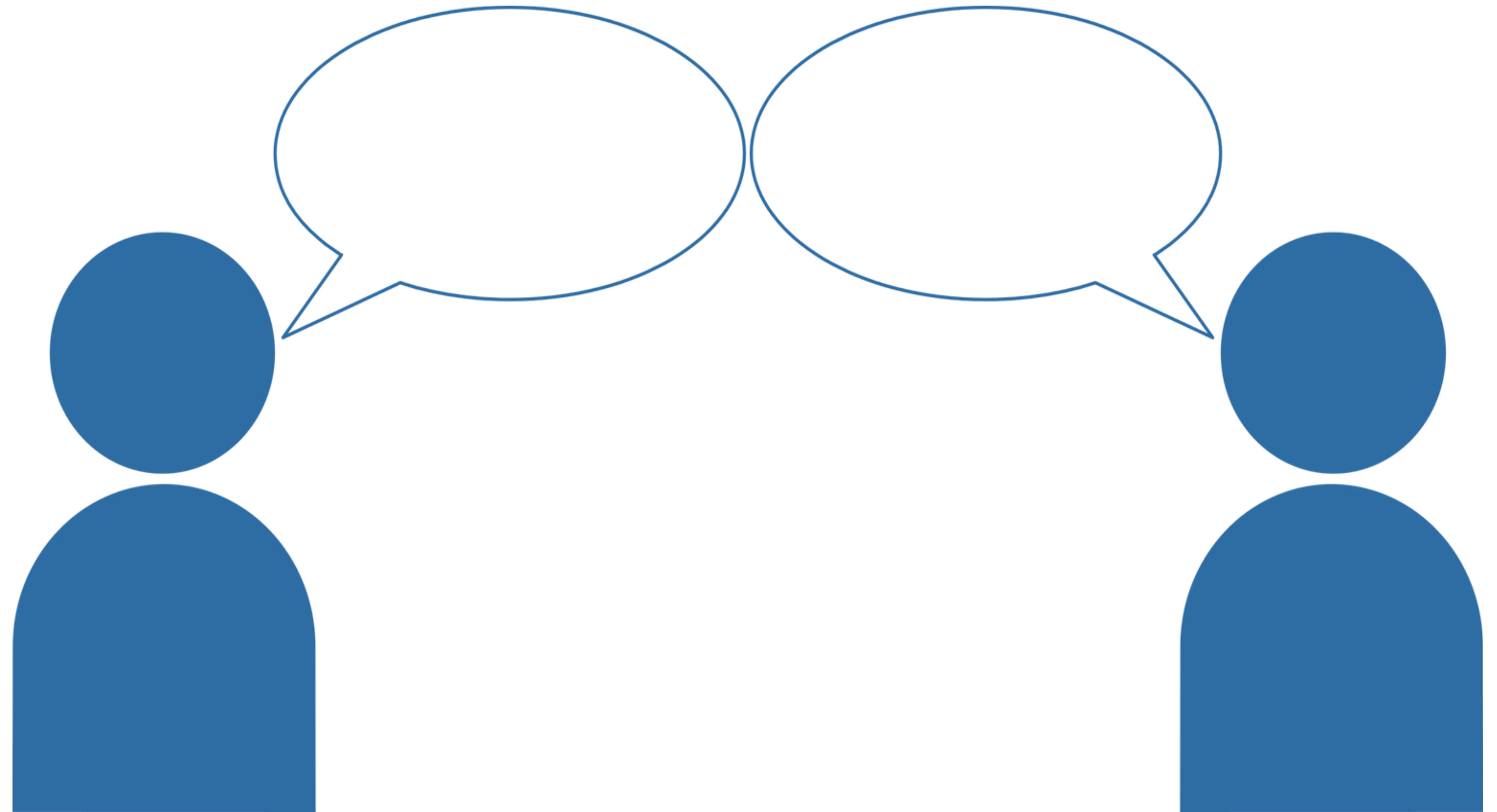
[Hampshire Happy Talkers - Speech Language and Communications Pathway | Hampshire CTSH](#)

[Tiny Happy People](#)

[Ace Centre | Charity specialising in AAC & Assistive Technology](#)

[EEF | Communication and Language](#)

Time to talk...



Future meetings

10 June 2026

5 November 2026

