



# UK NSC screening for permanent hearing loss in children at school entry recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC decided that there is insufficient evidence to change the current recommendation.

Hearing problems can affect the development of a child's speech and communication skills. It can also affect their behaviour and ability to learn. Since 2006, most children are screened for hearing loss when they are born. But children with hearing loss can be missed or children can develop hearing loss when they are older. Some children are screened for hearing loss when they start school.

## Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

The UK NSC previously recommended that screening children for hearing loss when they start school should continue where it was already implemented.

However, research was recommended to explore the continuing value of such a screening programme. This is because the introduction of the newborn hearing screening programme made the value of screening at a later age uncertain. Research was necessary to understand this before making a final recommendation on the future of school age screening.

The current review update still did not find enough evidence to make a well informed recommendation about screening for permanent hearing loss at this age. This is because there are still uncertainties about:

- whether school screening would detect more permanent hearing loss than areas which do not screen
- the accuracy of screening tests for permanent hearing loss in children starting school
- the advantage of screening children at school entry age in terms of helping children develop

For these reasons the UK NSC recommended that the current situation should continue.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's screening for permanent hearing loss recommendation, please visit:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/hearing-child>

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at [www.gov.uk/uknsc](http://www.gov.uk/uknsc). The UK NSC evidence review process is described at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process) and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at [legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations](http://legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations)

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England ([www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)).