

Shock diagnosis leads to a world with sound for Leeds fashion designer

After spending most of her life coping well with being deaf in her left ear, it was just two years ago that 27 year old Leeds business woman Lucy Short was diagnosed as being deaf in both ears; a diagnosis she would have never thought could result in her hearing better than ever.

Deaf from birth, it wasn't until Lucy reached the age of five that she was first diagnosed as being deaf in her left ear. She was given a hearing aid which she found awkward, bulky and difficult to keep in place. "I hated it!" Lucy said. "It looked like a big beige button and kept falling out. I was forever losing it and was frustrated wondering why I had to wear it."

"I have an older sister who has normal hearing, but my younger sister is also partially deaf - so at home we would play games like hide and seek that didn't rely on speaking and I was happy and confident," Lucy added.

"At school I was different; I was teased and would wear my hair down to cover my hearing aid. I was the only one with a hearing problem and with the exception of a few close friends I found that the other children didn't understand."

Not letting deafness hold her back, Lucy started her own successful fashion label, Blonde and Wise, in 2005. "My hearing has been an issue at times," Lucy remembers. "I would let my business partner deal with people on the phone and I would make customers write things down so not to make mistakes. If someone shouted something through to me in another room they would think I was ignoring them when I genuinely didn't hear. I was supposed to be able to hear with my hearing aid."

It was just two years ago that all this changed for Lucy when her NHS hearing aid broke. Told she would have a six month wait for a new one, Lucy decided to go private

and booked a same day appointment with an audiologist. It was during this appointment Lucy's hearing was re-tested and she was diagnosed as being deaf in both ears.

"I was totally stunned and in shock," Lucy said. "I thought with my one hearing aid I was hearing the same as everyone else. At first I was angry it hadn't been picked up before but then being fitted with my two new digital hearing aids was a revelation. It took a few days to get used to them because everything was so noisy. I was startled by sudden sounds and I could hear new noises like clocks ticking and the fridge humming. It was like another world but it explained why I was missing things people had said. Now when my partner shouts to me in another room and I don't reply it's because I've chosen not to! With my new hearing aids my confidence has grown, I join in with jokes and going out with friends is much more enjoyable because I'm not missing anything."

Lucy's story not only highlights the fact that with determination hearing loss and deafness doesn't have to hold you back but it also shows the importance of getting the right diagnosis and treatment. I hope Lucy's story will encourage others and make people realise the importance of getting the appropriate care.

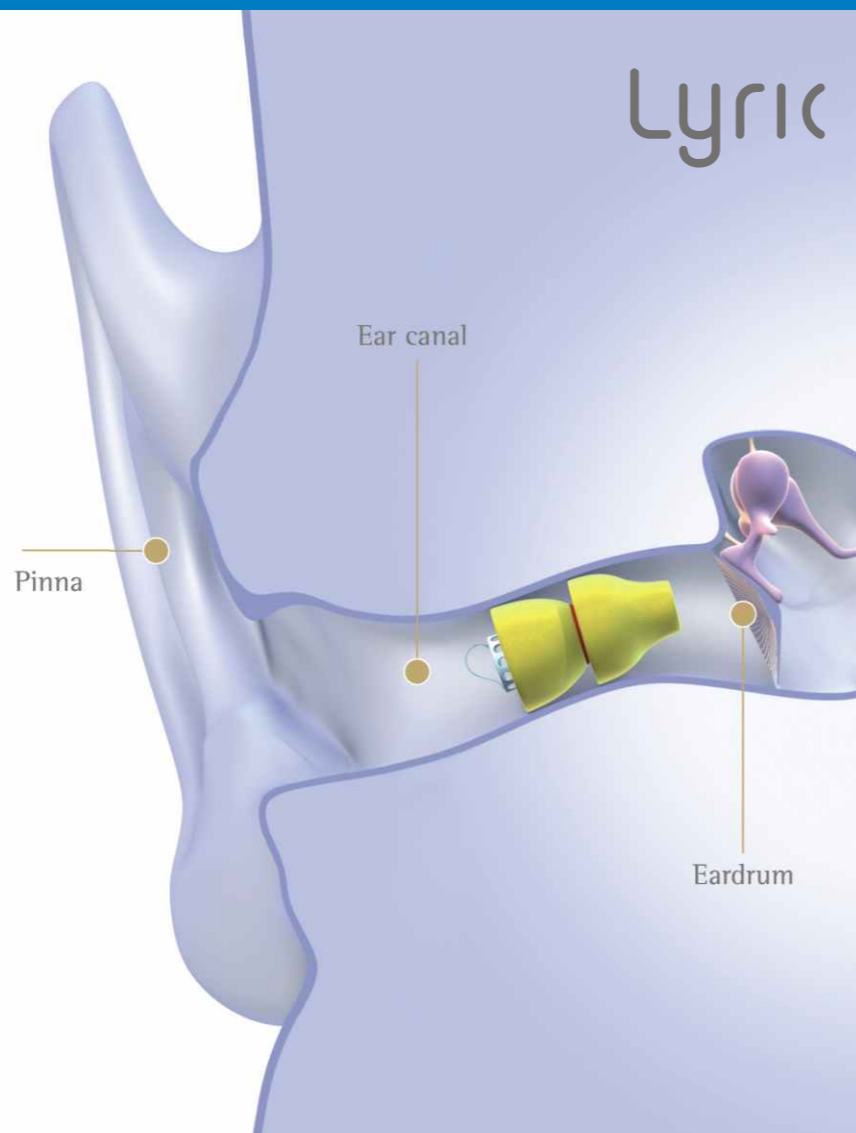


Imagine not having to think about or even see your hearing aid, not having to worry about changing the battery or taking it out to shower, to exercise, to talk on the phone or even to sleep.

Lytic, from Phonak is the next generation of hearing aid; designed to be worn 24/7 for up to four months, it is placed, neatly inside your ear canal and is completely invisible from the outside. Tiny, effortless and unnoticeable, Lyric works with your ear's natural anatomy to deliver a purer sound quality and reduce background noise.

Already a huge hit in the United States, this breakthrough hearing aid, is now available in your local area exclusively through our trained professionals at Click Hearing.

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23 Corbets Tey Road, Upminster, Essex

Click Hearing open first shop in Upminster with groundbreaking technology

Corbets Tey Road, Upminster, is now at the cutting edge of hearing technology as Click Hearing opens our first dedicated shop with groundbreaking virtual sound environment testing equipment in our hearing lab.

For hearing loss sufferers, conducting a hearing test or fitting a hearing aid in a sound proof booth is important but it does mean that the user cannot be confident that a new hearing aid will perform at its best when they are out at the supermarket or travelling in a car which are places where there are complex sounds all around. The Virtual Sound Environment (VSE) system installed at our new Upminster shop enables hearing tests to be personalised to realistic situations. The VSE enables comprehensive testing of how well an individual is able to process sound in a range of everyday

listening scenarios under controlled, reproducible conditions. Using a VSE for performing listening tests makes it possible to test many aspects of hearing including: speech intelligibility, listening preference, annoyance, listening effort, and a range of cognitive factors, such as working memory and attention."

Click Hearing's new Upminster Hearing Centre features a Virtual Sound Environment with the latest in surround sound technology. The shop is the first dedicated Hearing Centre in Upminster and a first for Click Hearing. Ben Mann comments, "I am delighted to open our first dedicated shop in Upminster, this has been a personal and business ambition as it enables us to take advantages of technology such as the VSE which enables us to bring the very best to our customers in Upminster."

Harley Street - Brentwood - Chelmsford - Epping - Redbridge - Upminster

Did you know?

According to Natural History, the first deaf person recorded was **Quintus Pedius** a noted painter during the 1st century AD.

The daughter of King James I, **Princess Joanna** (1426 – 1486), was born deaf and in public used sign talk even though in that era it was seemed to be improper.

The emperor of Rome, **Hadrian** who inherited fame for building the Hadrian Wall in Brittany 76 to 138 AD, had to cup his ears to hear orders repeated because of hearing difficulties as recorded in contemporary court descriptions.

Thomas Alva Edison inventor of the electric light bulb, patented 1,093 inventions during his lifetime including the acoustic gramophone, motion pictures and film projectors as well as the kinetophone, developed hearing problems at an early age through illness and recurring, untreated middle-ear infections.

Tinnitus

don't ignore the signs

Tinnitus should not be ignored, as it can be the herald of more serious underlying hearing loss. It is estimated that over seven million people in the UK are affected by tinnitus - which manifests itself as a loud ringing or buzzing in the ears. Many people tend to choose to ignore it and don't seek a diagnosis from their GP, yet the symptoms can be an early warning of more serious conditions.

For the half a million people for whom the symptoms are severe, the condition can have a massive effect on everyday life, causing lack of sleep, problems with concentrating at work and even problems in personal relationships.

"We now know that tinnitus is not a single problem, but can be a common symptom of underlying causes," said Vivienne Michael, Chief Executive of Deafness Research UK. "This can be anything from noise-induced hearing loss from exposure to loud environments; a side effect of certain drugs; or in some extreme cases, more serious medical conditions. Any change in the body's normal function should be investigated and in the case of tinnitus, early diagnosis is advisable and appropriate treatments sought."



Deafness Research UK's new leaflet 'Helping you to hear better: hearing loss and hearing aids', outlines what causes different types of hearing loss and advice on what to do next. It also highlights the fact that hearing aids might be helpful in helping you to cope with tinnitus. Tinnitus can be common in those diagnosed as hard of hearing, partly due to the damage to the hearing system which is associated with its onset. For those with a hearing impairment, a hearing aid may not only

help to make external sounds more audible but may, in some cases, reduce the level of the tinnitus.

For a free copy of the Deafness Research UK leaflet, call Click Hearing on 0800 612 1345. If you are concerned about tinnitus, call now and book an appointment with Jane Smith, our hearing therapist who specialises in tinnitus.

