



Richard Foord MP

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16 June 2025

Dear Steve

RE: AUDIOLOGY SERVICES IN EASTERN DEVON

I write to you with some concern about the somewhat chaotic transfer of the audiology contract, after being inundated with emails and phone calls from unhappy constituents over recent weeks.

I understand that the previous provider of the service, [Chime](#), withdrew its provision at the end of March.

This follows what appears to be [challenges linked to the funding for its contract](#). Residents of Seaton were pleased to have this community interest company based at Seaton Hospital.

The successor audiology service appears to be poorer than the one Chime provided, at this stage at least.

My constituents are frustrated by a lack of information related to the new service and confusion about how it is provided.

There also appear to be fewer locations in Eastern Devon where my constituents can visit one of the new providers to obtain repairs, batteries, or hearing tests, with some people telling me they will now have to travel into Exeter, rather than to a local community hospital for example.

I note that in your recent correspondence, you have suggested that hearing aids can last as long as seven years and that you expect them to be repaired when it is appropriate to do so. However, I understand that the new providers' software may not be compatible with people's existing hearing aids, so they cannot be repaired.

I would like to know if this issue was taken into consideration when agreeing the funding for the contract.

These are the main themes of the complaints that I have received:

- People not being informed about a replacement provider and changes taking place as a result
- Hearing aids being replaced rather than being repaired
- People left in limbo for weeks

Website - www.richardfoord.org.uk **Facebook** - Richard Foord MP

Whilst Richard Foord MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you pass on, he will normally allow staff and authorised volunteers to see it if this is needed to help and advise you. He may pass on all or some of the information to external agencies if this is necessary to help with your case. Richard Foord MP may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let him know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

- Difficulty obtaining batteries
- Having to travel to Exeter for hearing tests
- Confusion over referral or self-referral

I note that according to the Devon Live story (linked above) there were 5,489 people waiting for audiology in November last year across Exeter and Eastern Devon. In Eastern Devon a year ago, waits were around 10 months long.

I would be grateful if you would reassure me that the above issues are being resolved as a matter of urgency with patients being proactively provided with information about the changes and how they can access the new service for a range of needs.

Also, whether the new providers have indeed now agreed to repair, rather than replace hearing aids.

Finally, I would like to be reassured that the waiting list for audiology does not grow longer than it is already, so would like clarification on the length of wait and numbers of people waiting, as of June 2025.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Foord'.

Richard Foord MP
Member of Parliament for Honiton and Sidmouth

CC Sam Higginson, CEO, Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust