

**Freedom of Information request on the availability of earwax removal services in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS.**

- 1.** Is the ICS aware of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's (RNID) campaign on the loss of free NHS earwax removal services which affects around 2.3 million people a year in the UK who need professional earwax removal?
- 2.** Does the ICB agree with the 2018 NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guideline which states that GP surgeries or community ear care services should offer to remove earwax, if build-up "is contributing to hearing loss or causing other symptoms"? <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98> (Accessed March 2024)
- 3.** Is the ICB aware that in the RNID's recent report on earwax removal (January 2024) that Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS is classified as 'scenario 6' in their research into access to earwax removal services, meaning that "it commissions earwax removal services in all or part of its geographical footprint, but with restrictive criteria which does not comply with NICE guidance."?
- 4.** Does the ICB agree that this is the case?
- 5.** If so which areas within the ICS no longer have free access to this service?
- 6.** What other restrictive criteria are applied to access? Is age one of them?
- 7.** Are there now any general practices or community based services within the ICS area offering earwax removal services, excluding use of earwax softeners, without charge on the NHS?
- 8.** Has the ICS undertaken any investigation into inequality in access to earwax removal services? How much is being charged by each service provider? Is there any cap on charges?
- 9.** Has Healthwatch H&W been asked to investigate the patients' perspective in relation to accessing this service and if not when will this be initiated?
- 10.** Which private providers are providing a service for earwax removal services?
- 11.** What training have private providers been given and how is each service monitored in practice?