



Newborn Hearing Screening Policy

1. Purpose

The *Newborn Hearing Screening Policy* (the policy) sets the mandatory requirements that outline roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements for Health Service Providers that provide services for newborn babies in the WA health system as part of the WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program.

The WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program involves screening newborn babies to identify those with moderate to profound (> 40 decibels) congenital permanent bilateral, unilateral sensory or permanent conductive hearing loss including neural hearing loss.

The WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program is provided by the WA health system as part of standard maternity care.

This policy is a mandatory requirement for Health Service Providers under the *Public Health Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(c) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

2. Applicability

This policy is applicable to the Child and Adolescent Health Service and Health Service Providers that provide maternity and neonatal services.

The requirements contained within this policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider. The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

3. Policy Requirements

Health Service Providers providing the WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program must ensure local policies and procedures are in place that align with the requirements of this policy and the [Newborn Hearing Screening Procedure](#).

3.1 Child and Adolescent Health Service

The Child and Adolescent Health Service must provide the following services for the WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program:

- administrative and management services
- training and education materials for the WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program
- quality assurance.

Child and Adolescent Health Service must document:

- the administrative support provided to Health Service Providers
- newborn hearing screening results management including:
 - babies with a 'refer' result to be offered a referral to Perth Children's Hospital Audiology
 - babies with a 'pass' result and surveillance indicators to be followed up
 - recording and reporting of data for compliance monitoring.

3.2 Health Service Providers providing newborn hearing screening tests

Health Service Providers that provide newborn hearing screening must:

- nominate at least one contact position at each site that will be the point of contact with the Child and Adolescent Health Service
- ensure timely screening of all eligible babies from six hours post birth (corrected age)
- ensure screening staff are appropriately trained and have access to ongoing education
- ensure timely provision of screening records and raw screening data to the Child and Adolescent Health Service
- provide and maintain screening equipment and consumables.

4 Compliance Monitoring

The Office of Population Health Genomics, on behalf of the System Manager, will monitor compliance with this policy by conducting periodic audits of internal procedures and/or guidelines to ensure alignment to these policy requirements.

The Child and Adolescent Health Service must use the [Performance Indicators Form - Newborn Hearing Screening Program](#) to collate data and submit an annual report to the Department of Health via the Office of Population Health Genomics genomics@health.wa.gov.au at the end of the financial year.

The System Manager may also request additional information on local policies, procedures and data to ensure alignment with policy requirements.

5 Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this policy:

- [Newborn Hearing Screening Procedure](#)
- [Equipment Specification Form](#) - Newborn Hearing Screening Program
- [Performance Indicators Form](#) - Newborn Hearing Screening Program

6 Supporting Information

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of this policy:

- [National Agreement of Council of Australian Governments \(2009\)](#)
- [National Framework for Neonatal Hearing Screening \(2013\)](#)
- [Newborn Hearing Screening Program](#) (Perth Children's Hospital)
- [Newborn Hearing Screening Brochure](#) (Perth Children's Hospital)
- [Why does my baby need further hearing tests?](#) (Perth Children's Hospital)

7 Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this policy.

Term	Definition
Bilateral	In both ears
Congenital	(Of a disease or physical abnormality) present from birth.
Corrected age	Corrected age considers the time between premature birth and the actual due date of a full-term pregnancy.
WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program	A screening program that detects moderate to profound (> 40 decibels) congenital permanent bilateral, unilateral sensory or permanent conductive hearing loss including neural hearing loss. The testing is not diagnostic but will identify newborns requiring further assessment to confirm the presence of hearing loss.
Refer (positive) result	A refer occurs when a child has not passed the newborn screen in the same ear/s on two separate occasions and needs to undergo further testing conducted by an audiologist. A positive result.
Surveillance indicators	An attribute or exposure that is associated with an increased probability of a specified outcome i.e. family history, syndrome, infection.
Screening staff (screener)	Personnel who have completed an approved education program and achieved competencies in performing universal newborn hearing screening using an approved hearing screen device.
Unilateral	In one ear.
WA health system	The WA health system is comprised of: (i) the Department; (ii) Health Service Providers (North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service, WA Country Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA, Quadriplegic Centre and Health Support Services); and (iii) contracted health entities, to the extent they provide health services to the State.

8 Policy Contact

Enquiries relating to this policy may be directed to:

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9 Document Control

Version	Published date	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0167/21	29 July 2021	July 2023	Original version
MP 0167/21 v.1.0	8 October 2024	October 2027	Policy review and amendments as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title amended with the removal of 'Program.'• Purpose section refined.• Policy requirements section refined and updated. Additional requirement for Health Service Providers added to improvement alignment with the Newborn Hearing Screening Procedure.• Compliance monitoring update to reflect the policy owner's responsibility to monitor policy compliance.• Related document: Newborn Hearing Screening Procedure updated.• Removal of the following definitions: 'pass (negative) result', 'permanent childhood hearing impairment' and 'rescreen' and inserted within the procedure definitions. Definition for 'WA health system' definition inserted.			

Note: Mandatory policies that exceed the scheduled review date will continue to remain in effect.

10 Approval

Approval by	Nicole O'Keefe, Assistant Director General, Strategy and Governance Division
Approval date	28 July 2021

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