Explanation of Hearing Test Report

This is a brief guideline as to how to read and understand the different Audiogram categories as defined by the HSA, that may appear in the **Hearing Test Report**. Any further detailed understanding or diagnosis, if required, should be obtained from a <u>company doctor / registered medical practitioner (RMP)</u>.

At first glance the Report Table may not make much sense but there is quite a lot of information easily available from it. You will see that the Results are made up of columns of information, including name, date of birth, hearing categorisation, department. Please read through this brief guide and refer to the H.S.A. Guidelines on Audiometry in order to better understand the **Hearing Test Report**.

Classification of Audiograms: Categories of Hearing

Category 1:   refers to normal hearing level.

A category 1, or blank space, in the report sheet(s) simply indicates the hearing level is within normal limits, based on the person's age.

ACTION REQUIRED: NONE

Category 2:   refers to "warning" level for the particular ear and frequency group.

According to different age groupings, a Category 2 hearing level indicates that the individual has fallen into the "warning" level. This can occur in both low and high frequency groups and in both ears. It is a below normal hearing level for the age of the particular individual.

ACTION REQUIRED: The individual should be advised of the results but a referral is not required.

Category 3:   refers to "referral" level for the particular ear and frequency group.

According to different age groupings, a Category 3 hearing level indicates that the individual has fallen into the "referral" level. This can occur in both low and high frequency groups and in both ears. It is a somewhat significant low hearing level for the age of the particular individual.

ACTION REQUIRED: The individual should be advised of the results and should be referred for review by a company doctor (RMP), or medical specialist (ENT)

Category U: refers to a Unilateral Hearing Loss, which is not due to noise, or at least not noise alone.

This category indicates that there is a <u>marked difference in the hearing levels between the left and right ears</u> (asymmetrical) of a particular patient. Once again, this is based upon agreed decibel figures for both low and high frequencies. A Category U can therefore be found in only one ear at a time (i.e. showing a difference between ears.)

ACTION REQUIRED: The individual should be advised of the results and referred to RMP

Category 4: **refers to a significant drop of hearing in any one of the four frequency groups, when compared to the immediately preceding audiometric examination.**

This is used when comparing a preceding Audiogram of an individual. It tells us that there has been a significant drop in the hearing level since the last test. This is based upon agreed decibel figures for both low and high frequencies. A Category 4 can, therefore, be found in all frequency groupings.

ACTION REQUIRED: The individual should be advised of the results and referred to RMP

Please note, that comparisons with preceding Audiograms may not be valid unless the testing conditions, i.e. sound booth and calibrated equipment, are similar.

Abbreviations and explanations

The Category number will appear first followed by an abbreviation in letters as to where the category is found. If particular Category numbers are not present in the result for an individual, then they do not apply. If there are no letters after the Category number, then the category applies to both ears across both low and high frequency groups

The letter tells you which ear(s):

L	refers to left ear
R	refers to right ear
B	refers to both ears

Other abbreviations include:

No data	means no previous results are available. Occurs in first time testees.
Age under 18	means a categorisation has been completed, however, patient is below 18 years old, and HSE tables do not include data for these individuals.

For example:

1	refers to normal hearing across all frequencies and in both ears
1 4-no data	category 4 cannot be calculated, as it has no previous test results to compare to (probably a first test or new entry).
2B	refers to category 2 in both ears.
2L	refers to category 2 in the left ear only .
3L	refers to category 3 in the left ear only
3B	refers to category 3 in both ears.
4L	refers to category 4 in the left ear
U	refers to category U (unilateral loss) as part of result for left/right ear

Some examples as they might be used in the summary list:

Name	Categorisation	Result	
Joe Bloggs	1	Normal	(Explanation)
Mary Murphy	1 4-no data	Normal	- Acceptable hearing ability.
John Doe	2L 4-no data	Warning	- Acceptable hearing ability, with no previous result available.
Richard Tyrell	2L 4L	Warning	- Mild hearing impairment in the left ear, with no previous comparison.
John Smith	3R	Referral	- Mild hearing impairment in the left ear, with a significant drop from previous level.
Pronchias O'Murchu	2R 3L 4B U	Referral	- Poor hearing in the right ear.

- (Explanation)
- Acceptable hearing ability.
- Acceptable hearing ability, with no previous result available.
- Mild hearing impairment in the left ear, with no previous comparison.
- Mild hearing impairment in the left ear, with a significant drop from previous level.
- Poor hearing in the right ear.
- Warning in the right ear, Referral in the left ear, a drop in both ears from previous, & hearing levels are asymmetrical.

In general:

1. Industrial (or occupational) type deafness by itself tends to occur in both ears and at about the same level. This is because industrial sounds and noises tend to come from all directions and are not concentrated at any one side, unlike the regular shooting of a gun which would show a greater loss in one ear. Therefore, a hearing loss in one ear only, whether noise induced or other wise, usually is not indicative of industrial type hearing loss.

2. The next step is to try to understand that industrial deafness also tends to have a certain shape to its Audiogram. What this means is that a portion of the tested frequencies would be at a typical level and the remainder would be at another. Typically, the low frequencies in both ears should show a better hearing level than the corresponding high frequencies.

3. Also, the high frequencies in both ears will show a loss of hearing. This means they will not normally show a category 1 (normal level), although early signs may be present.