

3.6.3.110 Guidelines to Table 11 - Hearing & Other Functions of the Ear

Summary

Table 11 is used to assess functional impairment when performing activities involving hearing (communication) function or other functions of the ear. Other functions of the ear include balance.

The diagnosis of the condition must be made by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. There must also be supporting evidence of the diagnosis from an audiologist or an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist.

If the person uses a prescribed hearing aid, cochlear implant or other assistive listening device the person must be assessed on their ability to undertake activities listed in Table 11 while using any device that they have and usually use.

In determining whether the person has received all reasonable treatment for their impairment, consideration should be given to the aids and equipment or other assistive devices the person has and usually uses. For example, if a person would benefit significantly from an assistive listening device but chooses not to use one, consideration should be given to whether they have received all reasonable treatment and their impairment can be considered fully treated.

If the person uses recognised sign language or other non-verbal communication method as a result of hearing loss, Table 11 should be used.

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 11 - Hearing and other Functions of the Ear

Determining the level of functional impact

When determining which impairment rating applies to a person the rating that best describes the person's abilities or difficulties must be applied. In applying the descriptors, each descriptor sets out how the points within it are to apply.

Under the 5, 10 and 20 point descriptors in order to meet the descriptor in Table 11 a person must satisfy either (1) or (2). To satisfy (1) all of the sub points (a), (b) and (c) must apply to the person. Point (1) relates to hearing function, while point (2) relates to difficulty with balance or ringing in the ears.

To satisfy the 0 or 30 point descriptors, all of the points listed in the descriptor must apply to the person.

Guidelines to the Tables effective from 1 January 2012

Determination of the descriptor that best fits the person's impairment level must be based on the available medical evidence including the person's medical history, investigation results and clinical findings. A person's self-reported symptoms must not solely be relied on. It would be inappropriate to apply an impairment rating based solely on a person's self-reported functional history if this level of functional impairment is not consistent with the medical evidence available.

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 11 - Hearing and other Functions of the Ear

Some conditions causing impairment commonly assessed using Table 11

These include but are not limited to:

- congenital deafness,
- presbycusis,
- acoustic neuroma,
- side-effects of medication,
- Meniere's disease which affects the inner ear,
- tinnitus,
- neurological conditions which affect hearing function such as multiple sclerosis.

***Example:** A 50 year old male suffers from hearing difficulties due to many years working as a tradesman in the commercial building industry. Supporting evidence confirming his diagnosis has been provided from an audiologist. This man has been fitted with a hearing aid which has significantly improved his hearing. He has been using this hearing aid for the past 5 years and without it, he finds communication more difficult particularly at further distances. The medical evidence states that he uses his hearing aid in most social environments.*

Without his hearing aid, this man has severe difficulty hearing any conversation or sound. With his hearing aid, he has some difficulty hearing a conversation at an average volume and has difficulty hearing a conversation when using a standard telephone.

The condition is considered fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised and under Table 11, this man would be assessed when using his prescribed hearing aid so would receive 5 points under Table 11 due to the mild functional impact his hearing has on his daily activities. Under the 5 point descriptor this man would meet (1)(a) and (c).

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 11 - Hearing and other Functions of the Ear

Impairments that should not be assessed using Table 11

Guidelines to the Tables effective from 1 January 2012

Impairment in communication function that is not due to hearing function or other functions of the ear.

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 11 - Hearing and other Functions of the Ear