Overview

This standard covers examination of the individual's external ear only. It does not include further treatment that might be recommended following examination of the ear. The examination could be carried out in a variety of care settings, including hospitals – both for in and out patients, GP surgeries, nursing and residential homes, and in the individuals own home.

The term “individuals” is intended to cover adults and children, though there may be internal policies and protocols which restrict the group on whom you can perform ear examinations. Likewise this standard covers all care groups including the elderly, those with long term mental health problems, and those with learning disabilities.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.
SFHCHS20 - SQA Code HD2G 04
Undertake examination of the external ear.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

P1 apply standard precautions for infection prevention and control and other relevant health and safety measures
P2 check the individual’s identity and confirm the planned action
P3 give the individual relevant information, support and reassurance in a manner which is sensitive to their needs and concerns
P4 gain valid consent to carry out the planned activity
P5 collect the equipment, ensure that it is in good working order, particularly ensuring that the batteries in the otoscope have sufficient power to produce a white light and securely attach a disposable or clean re-useable ear piece
P6 report immediately to an appropriate member of staff any reasons why you cannot continue with the examination
P7 position:
   P7.1 the individual in such a way as to enable easy access to the ear for the examination
   P7.2 yourself at the same level as the individual and in such a way as to be able to undertake the examination with the individual’s safety and your comfort in mind
P8 hold the equipment in a correct manner to ensure complete safety and comfort for the individual and allow the best visual field for you
P9 look at the condition of the external ear and surrounding skin and note any abnormalities
P10 choose the correct size speculum according to the size of the ear canal and attach it firmly to the otoscope
P11 hold the pinna in the correct way to straighten the external ear canal and insert the otoscope gently and view the external ear, looking for any abnormalities
P12 ensure you examine the ear thoroughly and cause as little discomfort as possible
P13 remove the otoscope from the ear and remove the speculum and place ready for cleaning
P14 tell the individual what you have done and if the ears are clear of occlusive blockage
P15 note your findings, document these if appropriate, and report your findings to an appropriate member of staff for further action if there is a blockage of the canal
P16 ensure the individual has suffered no adverse effects and allow them to return to an appropriate place and ensure they are comfortable
Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

K1 the current European and National legislation, national guidelines, organisational policies and protocols in accordance with Clinical/Corporate Governance which affect your work practice in relation to undertaking examination of the external ear

K2 your responsibilities and accountability in relation to the current European and National legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols and Clinical/Corporate Governance

K3 the duty to report any acts or omissions in care that could be detrimental to yourself, other individuals or your employer

K4 the importance of applying standard precautions to undertaken examination of the external ear and the potential consequences of poor practice

K5 the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence

K6 the anatomy of the external ear

K7 the anatomy of the middle and inner ear

K8 why it is important to examine the external ear only

K9 the signs and symptoms an individual may complain of which leads you and others to suspect a problem with the external ear

K10 the types of hearing loss and how to improve communication with individuals who are hard of hearing

K11 why you need to tell the individual what you are doing

K12 the purpose of an otoscope and how it works

K13 what you would do if the otoscope was not functioning properly

K14 how to clean all types of re-useable equipment

K15 why it is important to position the individual and yourself correctly for the examination

K16 the safe way to hold and use the equipment and why this is important

K17 why it is important to examine the external ear only

K18 why it is necessary to record all your findings, and what you should record

K19 the importance of immediately reporting any issues which are outside your own sphere of competence without delay to the relevant member of staff
SFCHHS20 - SQA Code HD2G 04
Undertake examination of the external ear.

Additional Information

External Links
This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and treatment planning
The candidate and assessor must only sign below when all Performance Criteria and Knowledge points have been met.

**Unit assessed as being complete**

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**Internal Verification —**
to be completed in accordance with centre’s IV strategy

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This Unit has been subject to an admin check in keeping with the centre’s IV strategy.

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**Unit completion confirmed**

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