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**Charity roadshow warns of mp3 "timebomb"**

*The charity Deafness Research UK has launched an innovative new roadshow to remind young people of the risks they face to their hearing from loud music if they don't turn down the volume on their MP3 players.*

**/24-7PressRelease/** - SHEFFIELD, UK, July 16, 2008 - The charity hopes that its show, the Specsavers Bionic Ear Show, will help get across the message about limiting exposure to loud music and preventing premature deafness, particularly from the abuse of MP3 volume controls which continues to be a serious problem with teenagers in particular. Vivienne Michael, Chief Executive of Deafness Research UK, said, "The MP3 revolution has been fantastic in making music more accessible on the move. However, the worrying effect is that people may suffer permanent deafness and tinnitus far earlier than would be expected simply as the result of old age.

"We are particularly concerned about the lack of awareness of the issue amongst young people and we want to remind them of how precious and vulnerable their hearing is, but we have designed the show for people of all ages, and the message is as much for parents as it is for the youngsters."

As well as having a serious message, the show, which features "the world's largest ear", is designed to be fun and interactive. During the performance, the presenter builds a model showing the different parts of the ear which stretches to a huge 22ft long - 116 times the size of a normal ear! In an interactive demonstration the audience learns how the ear works, what can go wrong, and what can be done to fix it. It's easy to understand, even with no science knowledge. There are demonstrations of what it sounds like to have high frequency hearing loss plus "Guess that tune!" - how easy or difficult is it for people with cochlear implants (so-called "bionic ears") to recognise music?

Visitors can test their own hearing using do-it-yourself hearing screeners and at many of the shows there will be local ear experts on hand to answer any questions the audience may have.

The Specsavers Bionic Ear Show is currently touring the UK (full details of the schedule follow below). The Specsavers Bionic Ear Show schedule is subject to change in the future; an up-to-date version can be found at [www.bionicearshow.org](http://www.bionicearshow.org)  
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## Notes to editors

Future Locations of the Bionic Ear road show

July 2008

14th - Cambridge

16th - Oxford;

August 2008

4th - Eastbourne

5th - Hastings

6th - Tunbridge Wells

8th - Portsmouth

11th - Worthing

September 2008

1st-6th - Orkney Festival, Stromness;

7th-11th - Liverpool Festival;

November 2008

11-18th - Science Week Ireland

The Show continues a campaign, launched by Deafness Research UK and Specsavers Hearing Centres in 2006, to highlight that hearing is as important as sight and encourage people to protect their ears against potential damage. In launching the campaign, Deafness Research UK and Specsavers stressed that today's youth are at risk of going deaf significantly earlier than their parents, because they are listening to MP3 players too loudly and too often. A national survey found that that over a third of all 16-34 year olds listened to their MP3 player for more than an hour a day and 14% listened

for more than 28 hours as week. It also showed that 54% of people did not realise that listening to loud music on an MP3 player, in a nightclub or at a concert could damage their hearing. More than a third of people who have experienced ringing in their ears after listening to loud music, listen to their MP3 player every day. Ringing in the ears, or tinnitus, is a sign of damage to the hearing system.

#### About Deafness Research UK

- Deafness Research UK is the country's only charity dedicated to finding new cures, treatments and technologies for deaf, hard of hearing and other hearing impaired people.
- The charity supports high quality medical research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all forms of hearing impairment including tinnitus.
- The Deafness Research UK Information Service provides free information and advice based on the latest scientific evidence and informed by leading experts. The Information Service can be contacted on Freephone 0808 808 2222
- For more information on research into deafness, tinnitus and other hearing conditions, log on to the website at [www.deafnessresearch.org.uk](http://www.deafnessresearch.org.uk) where you can access a wide range of information. Alternatively you can e-mail Deafness Research UK at [info@deafnessresearch.org.uk](mailto:info@deafnessresearch.org.uk)
- One in seven people in the UK - almost nine million people - suffer hearing loss.
- Deafness Research UK was founded in 1985 by Lord (Jack) and Lady Ashley of Stoke.
- In January 2008, Action for Tinnitus Research (ATR) was linked with Deafness Research UK under a uniting direction order under section 96(6) of the Charities Act 1993.

#### Photographs and captions

- 1) Kenny, aged 5, with the Bionic Ear!
- 2) Vivienne Michael, Chief Executive of Deafness Research UK

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