



Welcome to the Cochlear Implant

Winter 2021 Newsletter!

Seasons greetings to all our patients, their friends and family.

As we move in to the festive period there will be a slight change to our clinics due to Christmas Bank Holidays. Please note the department will be closed on the following dates:

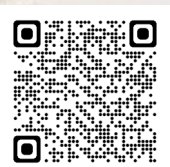
Monday 27th December

Tuesday 28th December

Monday 3rd January

We continue to provide both face to face and remote appointments. Please contact us if you require an appointment.

Additional support, such as information on wireless accessories, and basic troubleshooting will also be available from the manufacturer of your device.



MED-EL



AB Advanced Bionics

Farewell Emily

We would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to Emily O'Brien. Some of you may know Emily, who along with Helen Calland, work continuously behind the scenes of the North Wales Auditory Implant Service. From manning our phones, answering emails, attending meetings, arranging appointments, posting out batteries and spare parts as well many other tasks, both Helen and Emily make an enormous contribution to the day to day running of the service. Emily is moving on to another role within the Health Board but I am sure you will agree she will be greatly missed. Good luck in your new role Emily!



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How to Contact Us

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Patient Story

Patient stories are often shared with patients who are considering cochlear implantation, they highlight the realities of living with a cochlear implant and also give an insight into what to expect from initial assessment and life after implantation.

Julie has kindly agreed for us to publish her cochlear implant story. We hope you enjoy reading it!

My Journey Back to Hearing

“I don’t think I fancy that, thank you” - my response to the suggested referral for assessment for a cochlear implant! Eighteen

months later I agreed with family support.

On 9th December 2019 at the ripe old age of 83 I was implanted at Glan Clwyd!

My hearing loss became obvious about 25 years ago, and I found myself dreading social occasions. The loss was gradual until 4 years ago when it deteriorated rapidly.

My daughter drove me to Bodelwyddan for assessment and fortunately I met the criteria for an implant. I had been given some very helpful easy-to-read-and-understand literature. There was the opportunity to pause/delay my decision if uncertain.

There were scans, tests and a jab to be had. Tests complete, I met the consultant and signed the consent form. I was given

9th December as a possible date. How exciting! I was also given the opportunity to ask questions.



Check in time on 9th was 7.30 am. I was shown into a side room, given a jug of water, stockings and paper gown and pants! Visits from the anaesthetist and surgeon, both so re-assuring, and it wasn’t long before I was walking to Theatre for the procedure. I had faith in my surgeon’s skill and was quite relaxed. Before I knew it I was waking in the recovery room, feeling good! I was discharged that evening, a bit sleepy, with a pillow for comfort. My ‘hearing journey’ had begun! On ‘the day’ it might be a good idea to wear button front tops, take a notebook and pen, and book/crossword in case of delay.

Patient Story

Switch on was the 31st December. The robotic voices over time became more “normal”. I read aloud, used children’s books and CDs to help my brain link words and sounds. My husband would sit beside me saying short random sentences, days of the week, numbers, months and times. It was hard work as I had ‘listening fatigue’ after a while, but exciting when I got 10/10. It was baby steps all the way and much patience from family and me! During the pandemic it was wonderful to use the telephone to keep in touch. I’m so pleased I agreed to ‘proceed’ and thankful for all the support I have received on my journey back to hearing’.

Julie Davey

Would you be interested in sharing your story with us? If so, please get in touch with us and we can provide more information!

A very big thank you to all who have already contributed their stories to help others!

Virtual User Group Update

Due to the success of our last virtual user group back in July we have arranged for further groups to be held in 2022. Joanne Goss is an advanced audiological practitioner who specialises in tinnitus. Some of you may have met Joanne during her time in the cochlear implant team. She will chat to the group in our first meeting on **Monday 17th January 2022 at 10am**. She will be delighted to answer any questions you may have regarding tinnitus and cochlear implants.

The meetings are easy to attend and can be accessed via most smartphones, laptops, computers and tablets. For those new to the world of virtual meetings, we have developed step by step guides on how to access and use Microsoft Teams. For those with compatible sound processors, the meetings can be streamed using wireless or direct audio streaming.

Please contact Susan Boon via email at

BCU.CochlearImplantEnquiries@wales.nhs.uk if you would like to attend either of the groups. Details of how to join the meetings will be provided with your invite.



Research Opportunity



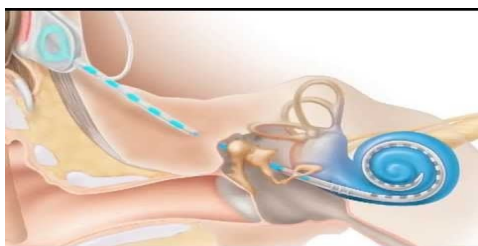
EXCITING NEW RESEARCH IN HEARING PRESERVATION COCHLEAR IMPLANTATION IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Some young people with profound hearing loss have some of their own hearing left in the low frequency range. Making the decision about a CI can be especially challenging for these young people and their families, because of the fear of losing this residual hearing. Over the past years, CI surgeons have managed to reliably preserve this residual hearing for the vast majority of their CI recipients.

As a CI team, we are now wondering if and how having their own hearing on top of their CI helps young people in their day-to-day life. For example, does it help with hearing in a noisy classroom? Or does it make listening to music more enjoyable?

We are therefore inviting young people with a CI who can still use some of their own hearing as well as the hearing via their CI to share their experience with us. We have set up a study where we will ask participants to answer a short *online* questionnaire about listening situations in their daily life. By doing this, we will be able to provide better information to young people and their parents/guardians that are in the process of getting a CI, about what they can expect after implantation.

If you would like more information on participating in this study and help us provide better information to future CI recipients and their families, please contact the study team via on mark.sladen@mft.nhs.uk. The study is performed online, attendance to the research centre is not required.



Aintree User Group –10 Years in the making!

2021 would have been the Aintree Cochlear Implant User Group's 10 year anniversary and here at the North Wales Auditory Implant service we are extremely disappointed that we were not able to mark this event with a special celebration.

Those of you who are regular attenders at the group and who were implanted pre-2016 may remember our 5th anniversary celebration that we had on 1st March 2016, along with Jenny's fabulous cake. It is frightening to think that another 5 years have passed since then.



Unfortunately due to COVID-19 we have been unable to the run this group (or any of our other cochlear implant user groups) since our last meeting on 3rd March 2020.

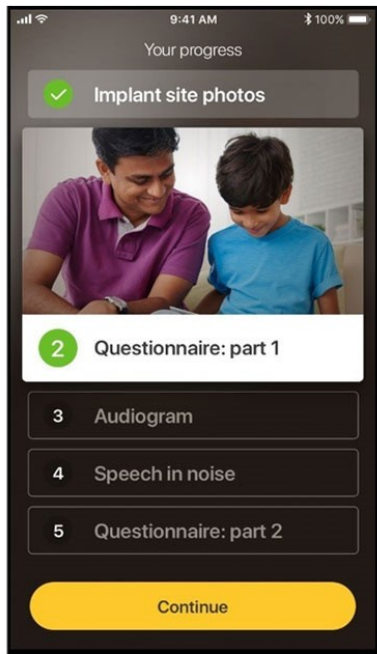
The Aintree Cochlear Implant User Group has been very well-attended over the years ever since it was first established by Shelagh Whiteside and our ex-colleague Louise Jenkinson in 2011. The group has provided immense support to many users and has been the start of many friendships. It is a place where users can share their stories, questions or experiences and a welcoming forum for new and potential cochlear implant patients to come and ask questions and hear of other people's experience. All of this has been extremely useful and valuable for prospective and current cochlear implant users. It has also been a great support tool for patients going through their cochlear implant journey which we as a team have missed greatly over the past 18 months.

We have really enjoyed supporting the group over the last six years and have many memories and stories of the group and its attendees. We are grateful for both the regular and one-off attendees which have kept this group going over the years and we have missed attending and supporting the group over the last 18 months. We cannot wait to get the group started and to hear from you all again!

We are very much hoping and crossing our fingers that this group can be re-instated in Spring of 2022 and we will be sure to mark the 10th anniversary with a celebration once we get back up and running! We may even have another cake as a celebration!!

In the meantime, we would like to say a big Happy 10th Anniversary and to thank you all for your support over the years. It has been a pleasure to support this group and great to see so many cochlear implant users benefiting from the group.

Remote Check Update



Following a recent update, there are now an increased number of Android mobile phones that are compatible with Remote Check. The additional compatible phones include Google Pixel (3, XL, 3a and 3a XL) and Samsung Galaxy S20 and S10.



Scan the QR code to find a full list of compatible phones.

For patients with the Nucleus 7 and Kanso 2, Remote check is a convenient at home testing tool that can be used to complete a series of hearing tests in the comfort of their own home. Features include a basic implant

check, hearing test and listening in noise test, these results in conjunction with information from questionnaires and photographs are sent to the department via a secure online portal.

Please contact the department if you would like further information on Remote Check.



Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!

**May we take this opportunity to wish you
a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New
Year from us all at the North Wales**

Auditory Implant Service!