



NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Tuesday 7 April 2026
Title:	Patient Experience: Cochlear Implant Service
Responsible Director:	Vicki Campbell, Director of Acute Services
Report Author:	Laura Harvey, QI Lead, Patient Experience

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This supports the following Corporate Objectives:

- **Better Value** – Delivering innovative and sustainable services for everyone. NHS Ayrshire and Arran supports this service across Scotland
- **Better Care** – Improving your experience of care

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

This story highlights the excellent, person-centred care delivered by the Scottish Cochlear Implant Programme, hosted at University Hospital Crosshouse. It presents the reflections of Johan and Alistair, two Ayrshire patients who have received cochlear implants, and describes the significant positive impact the surgery has had on their quality of life.

Additional feedback from other patients further reinforces the high standard of care and the value of the service.

2.2 Background

Both Johan and Alistair were assessed as meeting the criteria for cochlear implantation, following assessment.

Johan's hearing loss was diagnosed in her early 40s, following noise exposure from her time working in a factory and mill, and she wore bilateral hearing aids. Pre-implant, she was relying on lip reading and struggling to follow her husband even in quiet situations at home. She couldn't use the telephone to speak to her family. She was implanted in September 2025. At 3 months post implant, her ability to hear words has gone from 18% to 63% and her understanding of sentences (with no lip reading) has gone from 44% to 93%.

Alistair's hearing loss was diagnosed in his mid-50s. He was implanted in September 2022 aged 73. His ability to listen to and correctly identify words has gone from 8% to 82% and sentence understanding with listening alone has gone from 2% to 91%.

The Scottish Cochlear Implant Programme provides the national cochlear implant service for profoundly deaf adults and children from across Scotland. It was established at University Hospital Crosshouse in 1988 by Mr Raj Singh, ENT Consultant.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran is commissioned to provide this service by the National Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland. This Centre for Excellence supports cochlear implantation across all Health Boards in Scotland.

2.3 Assessment

The aim of cochlear implantation is to improve listening and functional communication in patients with permanent, bilateral, severe to profound deafness who do not gain adequate benefit from acoustic hearing aids. There is no alternative treatment.

A cochlear implant system consists of two parts – an internal electrode array (surgically implanted) and an external sound processor (worn behind the ear). It converts acoustic sound waves into electrical stimulation. Delivery of this then goes direct to the cochlea. It bypasses damaged hair cells, stimulates nerve endings and gives the individual a hearing sensation.

Enabling profoundly deaf patients to acquire (or keep) functional spoken language is the goal.

Cochlear implants are highly successful, with a functional success rate exceeding 95% and device failure rates below 0.5% requiring re-implantation.

Success is often measured by significant improvements in speech understanding (or speech development in children), a higher quality of life, and high patient satisfaction.

Outcomes can vary based on individual factors, including the type and duration of hearing loss and the consistency of post-surgical rehabilitation.

Measures of success:

- **Speech understanding:**

Many recipients, particularly those with post lingual hearing loss, experience significant improvements in speech perception. The average increase in speech understanding following cochlear implantation in Scotland is over 50%.

- **Quality of life:**

Recipients often report enhanced social interactions and improved communication, leading to a higher quality of life. In the 2024/5 patient survey, patients report outcomes such as:

- “It saved my job, improved my life and family relationships”
- “It helped me join in conversations – most importantly when my great grand-daughter came and told me ‘Papa, I am going to be a big sister’ how wonderful is that”
- “Was able to return to work in a senior medical position”
- “My child now has access to sound and can communicate at an age appropriate level. This was beyond our expectations”

- **Patient satisfaction:**

A high percentage of patients express satisfaction with the results of their cochlear implant. In the 2024/5 patient survey, 98% of service users rated the service as ‘very good’ or ‘good’, 98% felt it was worthwhile having a cochlear implant and 93% stated that their expectations were exceeded.

2.3.1 **Quality/patient care**

This high-quality patient care service relies on a motivated and skilled multidisciplinary team who support the patients from first referral, through implantation surgery and provides lifelong ongoing support

2.3.2 **Workforce**

This story highlights the positive outcomes that can be achieved when putting the patient’s needs at the centre of their care.

Sharing feedback with staff across the organisation demonstrates an open honest and transparent approach to improvement and this encourages other teams and individuals to adopt a similar approach in their improvement journeys.

2.3.3 **Financial**

No financial Impact

2.3.4 **Risk assessment/management**

No identified risk

2.3.5 **Equality and diversity, including health inequalities**

An impact assessment is not required as the individuals sharing their stories have given consent and any impact on others will be individual

2.3.6 **Best value**

This paper support Best Value across the following themes

- **Effective Partnerships** - Create compassionate partnerships between patients, their families and those delivering health and care services which respect individual needs and values; and result in the people using our services having a positive experience of care to get the outcome they expect.

2.3.7 Other impacts

- Demonstrates the importance of listening to, and working with, patients to put them at the centre of their healthcare journey and to ensure the best possible patient experience.
- This story fully supports delivery of corporate objectives and highlights the importance of applying them to every patient throughout their care journey.

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

This patient story is presented for awareness and to give recognition of this excellent service which NHS Ayrshire & Arran provides to patients across the whole of Scotland.

2.3.9 Route to the meeting

This story has not been heard at any other meetings but has been shared with the patients and the service involved.

2.4 Recommendation

For discussion. Members are asked to listen to this story and note the life changing benefits gained by patients who received a cochlear implant.