



**BCIG
SCOTLAND
2026**

**British Cochlear
Implant Group
Meeting 2026**





A very warm welcome to BCIG 2026

As Chair of the British Cochlear Implant Group, and on behalf of the organising committee, it is my privilege to bring the Cochlear Implant community together once again to share knowledge, celebrate innovation, and continue our collective mission to improve outcomes for deaf children and adults.

This year's conference holds particular meaning for me, as I also have the honour of welcoming you on behalf of the Scottish Cochlear Implant Programme – the host team for this year's event. Our team has worked alongside an incredible academic committee to create a programme that reflects the breadth, depth, and ambition of CI services across the UK and beyond. We are delighted to showcase Scotland's contribution to cochlear implantation, and to provide a platform for thoughtful discussion, clinical exchange, and future-focused thinking.

BCIG has always thrived on collaboration, curiosity, and shared purpose. Over the next two days you will hear from leading clinicians, scientists, researchers, engineers, and service users whose experiences and expertise continue to shape the direction of cochlear implantation. I hope you find the sessions stimulating, the conversations inspiring, and the connections you make both meaningful and lasting.

I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to the wonderful organising and academic committee members for all their invaluable support and input. A very special thanks to Brogan and Maxine from my own team who have gone above and beyond to make the conference run smoothly and ensure everyone has a great experience. Also huge thanks to Laura and Ying from BCIG for all their hard work.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks go to our sponsors. Without you, the conference simply would not happen and we are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support of BCIG. All the sponsors have gone to considerable effort to create engaging spaces for delegates so please do visit the exhibition stands and connect with sponsor representatives.

I wish you an enjoyable and enriching BCIG 2026.



Jane Gallacher
Chair, British Cochlear Implant Group
Head of Service, Scottish Cochlear
Implant Programme

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Programme

Day One – Tuesday 21 April 2026 Main Plenary Argyll Suite

Access session		Chair: Jane Gallacher
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome message	Jane Gallacher, BCIG Chair & Depute Lord Provost Bailie Christy Mearns
10.15 – 10.45	It's all about outcomes!	Keynote Speaker: Prof Sally Lewis
10.45 – 11.30	Removing barriers, strengthening enablers: Improving cochlear implant access in the UK	Panel: Pennie Taylor (Chair) Petrina Checkland Sally Lewis Martin O'Driscoll Carrie Drennan
11.30 – 11.40	Early findings from CIRCA 2 Project	Mr Jameel Muzaffar
11.40 – 12.10	How smart implants can deliver better hearing, for life	Cochlear Company presentation: Peter Van Gerwen Dr Brian Kaplan
12.10 – 13.30	Lunch and exhibition	

Graham Fraser Lecture session		Chair: Lyndsay Fraser
13.30 – 14.15	Music perception and cochlear implants: Challenges and opportunities This prestigious award and lectureship from the Graham Fraser Foundation is made at each BCIG annual meeting following nominations by the BCIG membership	Graham Fraser Lecturer 2026: Prof Andrew Oxenham
14.15 – 14.45	Built to perform, designed to evolve	Advanced Bionics Company presentation: Alistair Simpson Dr Patrick Boyle Sandra Driver
14.45 – 15.15	Coffee break	

AI session		Chair: Louise Craddock
15.15 – 15.40	AI in health and cochlear implant services: separating signal from noise	Keynote Speaker: Prof David Peebles
15.40 – 16.00	Using generative speech models to improve audiological testing capabilities How low can you go? The effect of reduced stimulation rates on the perception of phonemes, sentences, pitch, and prosody by cochlear-implant users	Invited Speaker: Dr Lidea Shahidi
16.00 – 16.10	REVs APP for rapid differential diagnosis of cochlear implant electrode issues	Dr Mary Grasmeder
16.10 – 16.20	Pain management in cochlear implants – results of UK survey	Marette Ambler
16.20 – 16.30	Hearing every patient: The creation of a national implant registry	Katherine Wilson Prof Debi Vickers
16.30 – 16.35	Introduction to IMPACT and LUCIA clinical trials	Mr Matt Smith Dr Efstratia Papoutselou
16.35 – 17.15	Join us in the exhibition space for the Posters & Prosecco session, where delegates can engage directly with presenters, who will be on hand beside their posters to discuss their work and answer questions. This session aims to foster insightful dialogue, encourage critical reflection, and support the exchange of emerging ideas within our field. Delegates are invited to access Kubify, our online poster platform in advance of the conference to review posters and explore supplementary materials.	Posters & Prosecco With thanks to Glasgow City Council's Civic Reception for sponsoring this session
18.15	Conference dinner at the Glasgow Science Centre Please meet us in the foyer of the Crowne Plaza hotel where we will take the short walk to the dinner venue accompanied by a piper.	Please bring your conference pass with you. This is your ticket for dinner and entry into the Science Centre.
18.30 – 19.15	Drinks reception and opportunity to explore the science exhibits	
19.30	Toast (the Selkirk Grace)	
19.45	Dinner	
21.30	Live music from The Jets (bring your dancing shoes for a mixture of live music including some Scottish ceilidh dancing)	
Midnight	Carriages	

Programme

Day Two – Wednesday 22 April 2026 Main Plenary Argyll Suite

Rehab session		Chair: Lise Henderson
9.00 – 9.25	Building language through interaction: The role of parents in supporting deaf children with cochlear implants	Keynote Speaker: Prof Evelien Dirks
9.25 – 9.50	The EPID: Early Parent Interaction with Deaf Children – A new tool co-produced with parents	Invited Speaker: Dr Martina Curtin
9.50 – 10.15	Infant mental health: Promoting positive relationships and self-esteem for deaf children	Invited Speaker: Dr Leah Cronin
10.15 – 10.25	Beyond the booth: Co-developing a digital testing platform with clinicians for speech assessments	Lisabeth Buelt
10.25 – 10.35	Empowering young people with cochlear implants in Scotland: Outcomes from the 2025 Scottish Cochlear Implant Programme transition event	Scottish Young Cochlear Implant Network: William Palmer Kara Gillespie Iona Cavill Ciara McCarthy Gypsy Nardini Aiden Coll
10.35 – 11.05	Break	

Music / AGM session		Chair: Ying Guo
11.05 – 11.35	BCIG AGM	
11.35 – 12.00	Perception of voice cues and vocal emotions in children and adults with cochlear implants	Keynote Speaker: Prof Deniz Başkent
12.00 – 12.10	Indicators of progress (IoP) in the first year of cochlear implant use for adult patients	Anne Marie Marley
12.10 – 12.20	National Prospective Study of Cognitive assessment in cochlear implant patients	Dr Tamer el Natout
12.20 – 12.30	Socioeconomic deprivation and cochlear implantation in Scotland: A 35-year population-based equity analysis	Dr Chinaza Pearl Chukwujekwu
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	

Futures session		Chair: Jenny Townsend
13.30 – 14.00	New technologies in cochlear implants: Precision medicine, robotic and fully implantable devices	MED-EL Company presentation: Prof Philippe Lefebvre
14.00 – 14.25	Intracochlear and intraneural intraoperative stimulation of the human auditory nerve to measure auditory brainstem responses	Keynote Speaker: Prof Thomas Lennarz
14.25 – 14.35	The role of modiolar proximity for cochlear implant electrodes	Prof Andrzej Zarowski
14.35 – 14.45	Does the Symons and Fanning classification of otosclerosis correlate with surgical difficulty during cochlear implantation?	Ms Holli Coleman
14.45 – 15.20	The next big thing! A forward look at emerging technologies, expanding criteria, and the choices that will shape our field.	Panel: Mr Jameel Muzaffar (Chair) Prof Doug Hartley Prof Thomas Lennarz Prof Nicci Campbell Marsha Jenkins Prof Philippe Lefebvre
15.20 – 15.25	BCIG 2027 Oxford Introduction	Oxford CI Team
15.25 – 15.30	Company stand award Thanks and Close	Brogan Thomson Maxine Love Jane Gallacher

Information

Wifi

Network: IHGWiFi.com Password: GLWCR

LinkedIn

@british-cochlear-implant-group
#BCIG2026

Calling all BCIG runners!

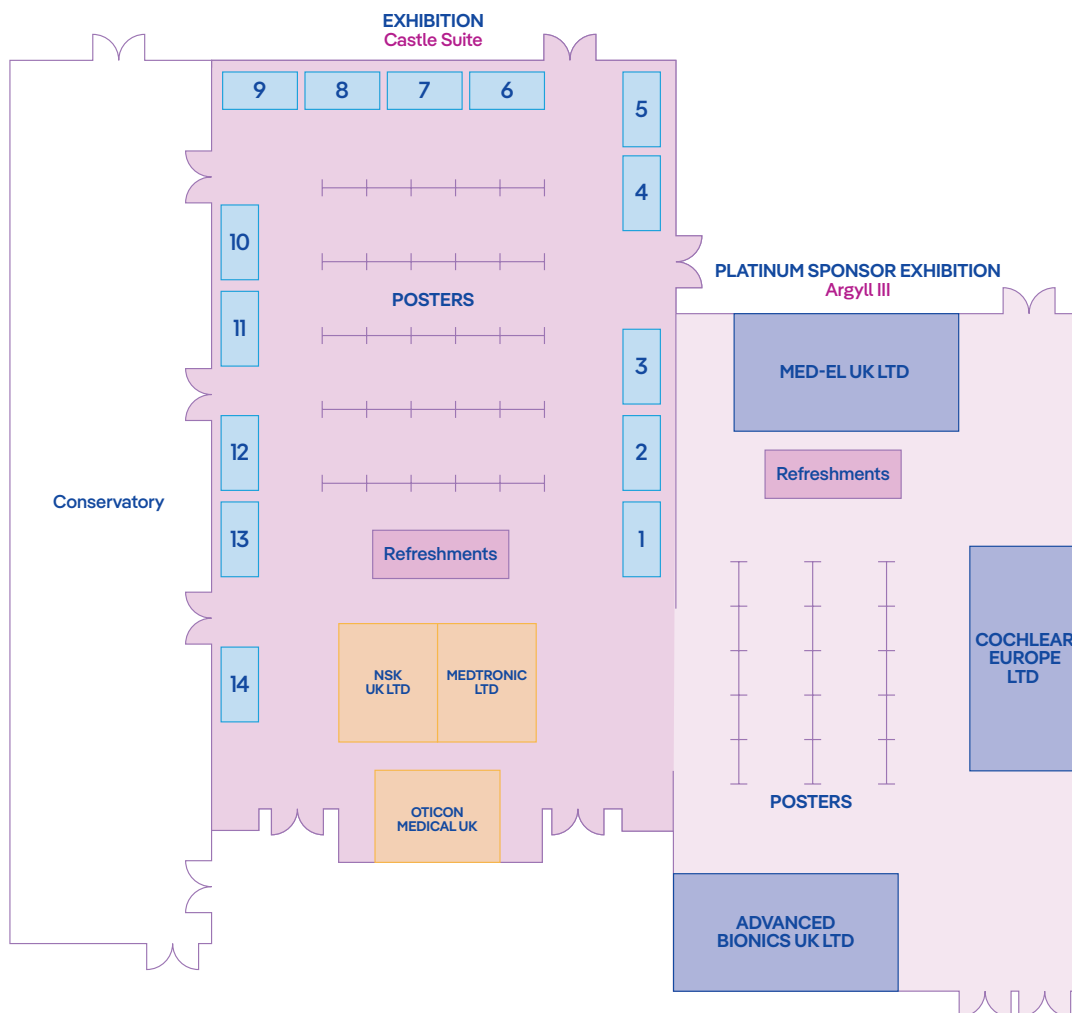
Wednesday morning at 7.00 - join us for a 5k run around the sights of Glasgow. Please meet in the foyer of the Crowne Plaza.

Conference and Exhibition Floorplans

Ground Floor: Overview



Ground Floor: Exhibition Rooms



Castle Suite

TABLE 1

Rinri Therapeutics

TABLE 2

Talking Mats

TABLE 3

British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BAToD)

TABLE 4

Phonak

TABLE 5

The Elizabeth Foundation

TABLE 6

Cochlear Implanted Children's Support Group (CICS) & National Cochlear Implant User Association (NCIUA)

TABLE 7

British Academy of Audiology (BAA)

TABLE 8

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

TABLE 9

Soundbyte Solutions (UK) Ltd

TABLE 10

Cochlear Implant International Community of Action (CIICA)

TABLE 11

British Society of Audiology (BSA)

TABLE 12

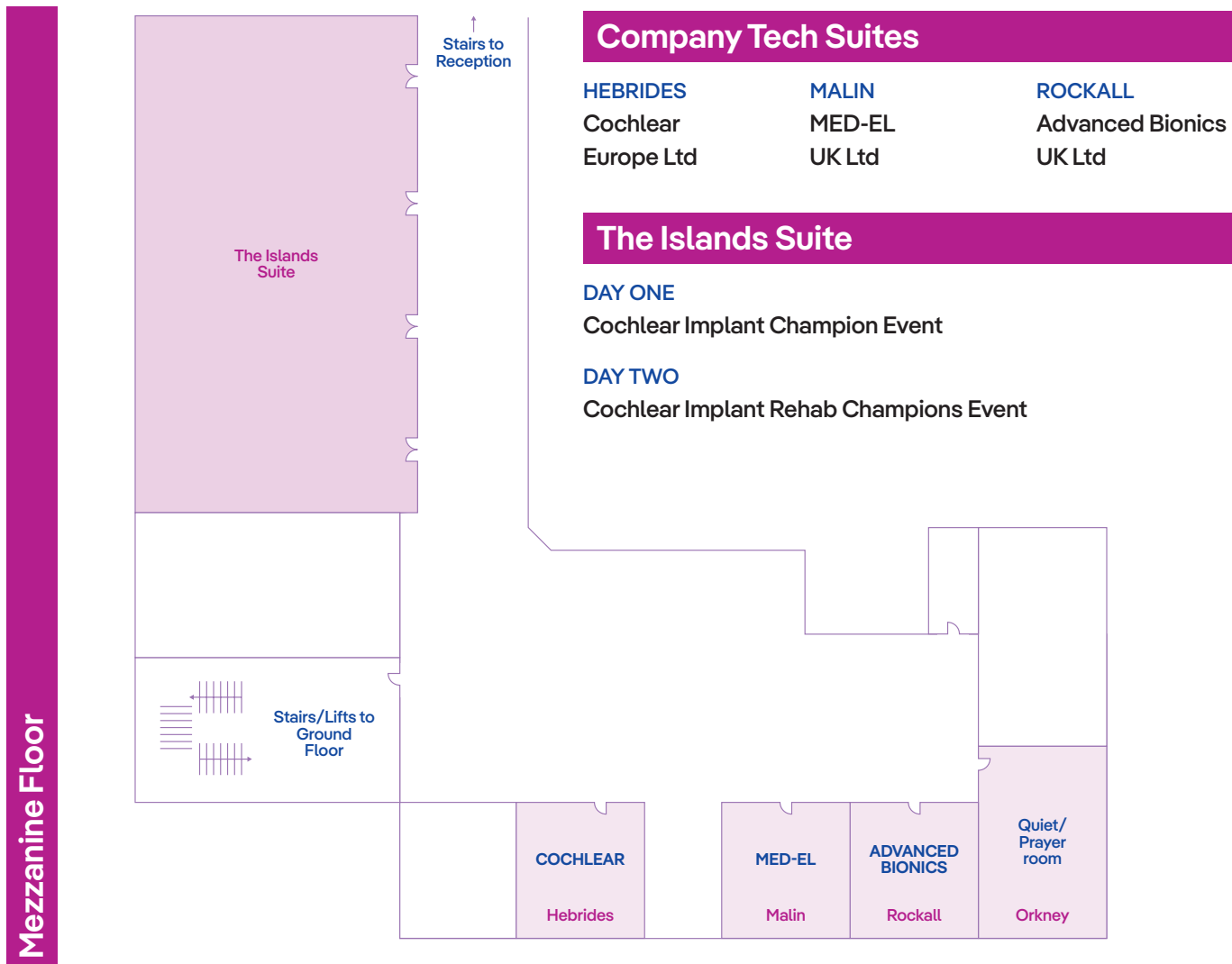
British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA)

TABLE 13

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

TABLE 14

Audiqueen (Otoconsult BV)



Biographies & Abstracts

Tuesday 21 April, 10.15 – 10.45am

Keynote Speaker



Prof Sally Lewis

Sally Lewis, the founder of Kintsugi International, is a distinguished leader and author in the field of value-based healthcare (VBHC). With a remarkable career spanning over 30 years as a general practitioner, medical leader and policy advisor, Sally has dedicated

her career to transforming healthcare systems worldwide. She is now an international advisor on value-based healthcare system transformation and Professor of Value in Health Management at Swansea University's Value-Based Health And Care Academy. Her work has been recognised by many institutions including Harvard Business School and the OECD, and she has just published her first book, 'Implementing Value-Based Healthcare: An Insider's Guide To Improving Patient Outcomes And Cresting Sustainable Systems'.

Abstract: It's All About Outcomes

The future of cochlear implants is exciting. Our technological capabilities as a human race are accelerating away at a breathtaking pace. But how will we afford them? And how will we ensure that cochlear implant technology is viewed equitably, ensuring equitable access for life-changing technologies for those living with hearing loss?

Tuesday 21 April, 10.45 – 11.30

PANEL

Removing Barriers, Strengthening Enablers: Improving Cochlear Implant Access in the UK

An interactive discussion session exploring practical solutions to the challenges affecting cochlear implant uptake in the UK. Clinicians, patients and planners will share their perspectives with conference delegates, who are encouraged to contribute ideas for positive change.



Pennie Taylor (Chair)

Pennie Taylor is an award-winning freelance journalist and broadcaster who specialises in health and care issues. Based in Glasgow, she was BBC Scotland's first Health Correspondent and has also worked on the newsdesks

of national newspapers. A former Head of Communications for the Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust in Edinburgh, Pennie has inside knowledge of how public services work. This gives her a uniquely informed perspective from which to approach and stimulate debate.

Sally Lewis

Please see left for biography.



Petrina Checkland

Petrina has a longstanding interest in severe-to-profound hearing loss and cochlear implant referral pathways, developed during her time as a referring audiologist. She joined the Adult Midlands Hearing Implant Programme

in 2019, where she took on the role of CI Mentor to support referral pathway development across the region.

She now works nationally as the Research Audiologist on the BCIG-sponsored INDICIA project (Improving Navigation and Decreasing Inequalities in CI Access). Alongside this, she has chaired the BAA/BCIG CI Champion Committee since 2023.



Martin O'Driscoll

Martin O'Driscoll is a Consultant Clinical Scientist and Clinical Director of Audiology and Hearing Implant Services at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. This integrated service is the largest in England and

encompasses adult and paediatric audiology across six hospitals and multiple community sites throughout Manchester.

He completed his Master's degree in Audiology at the University of Southampton in 1992 before moving to Manchester, where he obtained a PhD focused on electrophysiological measurements in adults and children with auditory brainstem implants.

Martin is an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Manchester, a Lead Examiner for the British Academy of Audiology, and an assessor for the Association of Clinical Scientists.

His primary clinical interest lies in adult cochlear implantation. Having been involved in the Manchester cochlear implant service since its earliest days, he has contributed to its growth into the busiest programme in the UK, navigating ongoing challenges around clinical capacity and increasing patient demand.



Carrie Drennan

My name is Carrie and I am a wife, mother, and Teacher. My hearing loss issues began in 2014 and progressed, at first steadily and then much more noticeably until I had a profound hearing loss. On every occasion that

I attended a hearing appointment, I asked desperately about further investigation, naming CI's and BAHA's explicitly, but was repeatedly told that nothing else, other than hearing aids, was viable. Faced with profound deafness in a career that largely relies on hearing well, I had reached a devastating impasse where I felt there was no way forward.

In 2024, during a routine hearing appointment, a fantastic audiologist took the time to listen to my growing concerns around my hearing and suggested a referral to the Cochlear Implant Service, which I was keen to pursue. I underwent assessment, and in March 2025, I met with the team once more and was told I was a suitable candidate, and I wept! Tears of relief.

I am currently 8 months post activation, and the experience has been completely life changing. I can hear my kids chat (and cheek!), have conversations with my husband, family and friends, and have returned to work fulfilling my ambition as a Head Teacher. Having the CI surgery has felt like watching as my life is being resuscitated.

Tuesday 21 April, 11.30 – 11.40

Early Findings from CIRCA2 Project



Jameel Muzaffar

Mr Jameel Muzaffar is a Consultant Otolologist and Auditory Implant Surgeon at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham. He is National Specialty Lead for ENT and Audiology within the

NIHR Research Delivery Network. His grant funded research work focusses on access to hearing healthcare, cochlear implantation, tinnitus, and noise-induced hearing loss.

Jameel is the Chief Investigator for the INDICIA (Improving Navigation and Decreasing Inequality in Cochlear Implant Access) study, a BCIG supported programme examining variation in cochlear implant access and developing scalable solutions to improve referral, assessment, and uptake across the UK. His broader research portfolio includes large multi-centre trials and cohort studies in hearing implants, surgical robotics, tinnitus, and military hearing loss.

Abstract

This talk will present early findings from CIRCA2, the second national Cochlear Implant Referral Criteria Audit, delivered within the wider INDICIA programme (Improving Navigation and Decreasing Inequality in Cochlear Implant Access). CIRCA2 examines real-world variation in patient involvement and potential referral for cochlear implant assessment across the UK, using contemporary national data.

The findings will be interpreted in the context of the original CIRCA study (conducted in 2021) to explore how patterns of access and inequality have changed over time. The session will highlight where eligible patients are still being missed, the scale of unwarranted variation between services and regions, and the implications for service design, workforce, and policy.



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Tuesday 21 April, 11.40 – 12.10

Cochlear Company Presentation

How Smart Implants Can Deliver Better Hearing,
For Life



Peter Van Gerwen

Peter Van Gerwen is Vice President for UK and Ireland and Vice President Commercial Excellence EMEA, Cochlear.

He is a senior leader in the hearing implant industry, currently serving as Vice President for UK and Ireland

and Vice President Commercial Excellence EMEA at Cochlear. In this role, he leads commercial performance across diverse markets, supporting Cochlear's ambition to help 1.5 million people hear by 2033. His work focuses on translating strategy into execution, strengthening commercial capability, and driving sustainable growth.

Over 20 years at Cochlear, Peter has held a range of senior leadership roles spanning R&D, product development, business unit leadership and commercial operations. This breadth of experience has played a key role in shaping Cochlear's global strategy and innovation agenda. Peter is passionate about advancing hearing healthcare and broadening access to lifelong hearing solutions, ensuring more people around the world can benefit from the power of hearing.



Dr Brian Kaplan

Dr Brian Kaplan is Senior Vice President of Clinical Strategy & Innovation, Cochlear. He is a distinguished otolaryngologist specialising in head and neck surgery. Since 2011, he has been serving as the Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology and

Director of the Cochlear Implant Program at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC), USA. His leadership in this programme has been instrumental in advancing cochlear implant technology and improving patient outcomes. He is also the Senior Vice President of Clinical Strategy & Innovation at Cochlear Limited, where he applies his expertise to the development and implementation of cutting-edge auditory solutions.

Dr Kaplan's previous research interests have included cartilage and inner ear hair cell regeneration, and he has been a study investigator assessing various otological agents, along with hybrid and traditional cochlear implantation. His current practice focuses on medical and surgical treatment of the ear, hearing loss, and implantable hearing technology.

Tuesday 21 April, 13.30 – 14.15

Graham Fraser Lecturer 2026

This prestigious award and lectureship from the Graham Fraser Foundation is made at each BCIG annual meeting following nominations by the BCIG membership.

Music Perception and Cochlear Implants: Challenges and Opportunities



Dr Andrew Oxenham

Andrew Oxenham obtained his PhD in 1995 from the University of Cambridge. After postdoctoral training at the Institute of Perception Research (IPO) in the Netherlands and at Northeastern University, Boston, he led a research group at MIT's Research Lab of

Electronics from 1999 to 2006. He then joined the University of Minnesota, where he is currently a Distinguished McKnight University Professor and the Director of the Center for Applied and Translational Sensory Sciences (CATSS). An author on over 200 peer-reviewed scientific publications in auditory and speech perception and neuroscience, he is also the founding Editor in Chief of the journal Trends in Hearing. He received early-career awards from the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) and the National Academy of Sciences, and was recently honoured with the ASA's Silver Medal in Psychological and Physiological Acoustics. His research has received continuous grant support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 1998.

Abstract

With over 1 million having already been implanted, the cochlear implant (CI) is the world's most successful sensory neural prosthesis. Despite the great successes, there are some aspects of CI processing and perception that could be improved. Important among these are music and pitch perception. This talk will explain the special challenges involved with music perception via CIs and will discuss current and future directions to enhance the music-listening experiences of people with hearing loss.



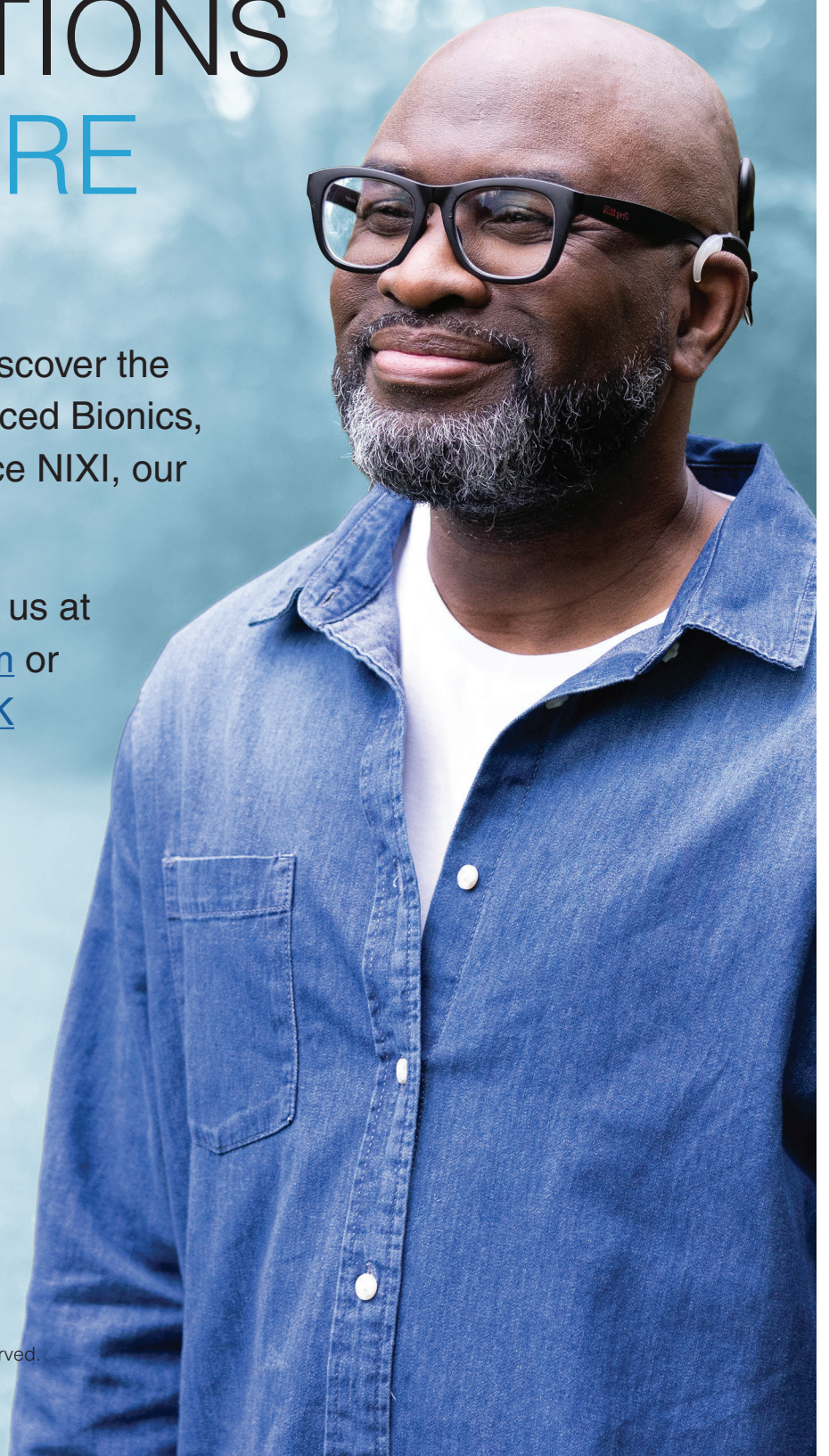


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For more information, contact us at info.uk@advancedbionics.com or visit AdvancedBionics.com/UK



Tuesday 21 April, 14.15 – 14.45

Advanced Bionics Company Presentation

Built to Perform, Designed to Evolve



Alistair Simpson

Alistair Simpson is President, Advanced Bionics/GVP Cochlear Implants, Sonova. Alistair was named the Group Vice President of Cochlear Implants, President of Advanced Bionics at Sonova, and a member of the Sonova

management board in July, 2024. Simpson is an experienced business executive with an excellent track record in managing full P&Ls as a General Manager, including leading marketing, sales and R&D functions. He has a longstanding expertise in operational excellence and highly regulated medical devices, including successful commercialization of multiple new products in a variety of therapeutic areas. Additionally, he has multi-region professional experience and has held various senior leadership positions in companies including Johnson & Johnson, Danaher and LivaNova. He holds an MBA from the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh and a Bachelor of Science in Geography from the University of Glasgow.



Patrick Boyle

Patrick Boyle is Senior Director External Cooperations, Advanced Bionics. He studied undergraduate Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Brunel University, for a Masters in Medical Physics at City University and received

his PhD in Auditory Perception at Wolfson College Cambridge. He has worked extensively in speech and hearing perception, initially in telecommunications as a design engineer at Philips, then at the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, where he worked on a signal processing hearing for profoundly deaf people. That project resulted in development of a single channel cochlear implant system. He then moved to the National Health Service working as a clinical scientist at University College Hospital. For the last 30 years he has worked at Advanced Bionics in a variety of clinical and research roles. His current position is Senior Director of External Co-operations.



Sandra Driver

Sandra Driver is Principal Rehabilitationist/Joint Adult Coordinator, Hearing Implant Team St Thomas, London. She is a Principal Rehabilitationist (Speech and Language Therapist) and Joint Adult Clinical

Coordinator at the hearing implant team St Thomas, London.

Sandra has worked on the team for over 20 years and recently has been working with the team to develop the “Regular Interval Follow Up” pathway for patients for whom the “Patient Initiated Follow Up” pathway is not appropriate. The Advanced Bionics remote programming capabilities has proven to be instrumental in supporting a number of RIFU patients and will share their experiences.

Tuesday 21 April, 15.15 – 15.40

AI In Health and Cochlear Implant Services

Separating Signal From Noise



Prof David Peebles

David Peebles is Professor of Cognitive Science at the University of Huddersfield. His work is funded by UK Government agencies, including Ordnance Survey and the Ministry of Defence, and combines artificial

intelligence and cognitive psychology to develop mathematical and computational models of human cognition. His current research includes a study funded by the Dubai Future Foundation developing explainable AI models for the early prediction of dementia diagnosis and progression, and a project to develop AI, big data, and digital solutions to reduce mental health inequities in West Yorkshire, as part of a new £11m NIHR Mental Health Research Group at the University of Huddersfield funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly presented as a solution to many of the pressures facing the NHS, from long waiting lists to workforce shortages. Yet for clinicians and service leads, it can be hard to distinguish genuine signal from background noise: which applications are realistic, safe and useful today, and which remain speculative or over-sold? This talk will provide a pragmatic overview of how AI can support healthcare, focusing on decision support, workflow automation and patient communication, and drawing on recent advances in large language models, complex reasoning systems and emerging “agentic” tools that can plan and act across multiple steps. I will outline potential benefits (such as more efficient use of clinician time and more personalised care) alongside key risks and pitfalls, including bias, safety, explainability, governance and the danger of over-reliance on imperfect systems. While the discussion will be framed at the level of the wider NHS, the possible applications and limitations in hearing healthcare, including audiology and cochlear implant services, as concrete examples, will also be highlighted. The aim is to equip attendees with concepts and questions that can help them critically evaluate AI proposals in their own services, separating promise from hype.

Tuesday 21 April, 16.20 – 16.30

Hearing Every Patient:

The Creation of a National Implant Registry



Katherine Wilson

Katherine Wilson is Lead Clinical Scientist/Clinical Coordinator of St Thomas' Hearing Implant Centre (Paeds), London. Katherine has worked at St Thomas' Hospital in the field of hearing implants for the past 25 years. During her time as Trustee to the British

Cochlear Implant Group (2017-2023), Katherine was selected to initiate and lead the development of a UK-wide Hearing Implant Registry, which has now been rolled out to all CI centres in England. Katherine continues to chair the National Registry for Hearing Implants (NRHI) steering group, and sits on the NHSE Oversight Registry Board



Prof Debi Vickers

Professor Debi Vickers is the Professor of Translational Auditory Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge (Clinical Neurosciences). She is a Speech and Hearing Scientist leading the SOUND Lab (<https://sound-lab.medschl.cam.ac.uk>). Her research covers: bilateral

and binaural hearing (including leading the BEARS project & co-leading LUCIA), electrophysiology, CI mapping, speech and language development, training and cochlear implant candidacy. Debi has previously been the BCIG secretary, led the candidacy working group that supported the change in NICE guidance in 2019, chaired various conferences in our field e.g. Music and CI 2021, CIAP 2023, ASM 2024 and is Co-Chairing the new IHI (Improving Hearing Implants) 2026. She is currently the President-Elect for EFAS (European Federation of Audiological Societies). The SOUND Lab also organises the Translational Auditory Research Group for researchers, clinicians and educators (open to all) to discuss their research in deafness.

Abstract

Aims

Cochlear implants are the most widely used and effective neuro-prostheses worldwide, offering reliable hearing restoration for individuals with severe to profound hearing

loss. Despite their strong safety record, variability in outcomes persists across populations, clinics, and surgical teams. Ensuring equitable and consistent results requires systematic monitoring at a national level. Without a National Registry, opportunities are lost to detect outlier data, identify early warning signals of device failures and complications, and evaluate long-term, population-wide outcomes. The establishment of a National Registry of Hearing Implants (NRHI), rolled out across the United Kingdom in June 2025, provides a model for how large-scale data collection can strengthen patient safety, guide clinical best practices, and improve outcomes across diverse patient groups.

Method

A National Registry of Hearing Implants was developed as a prospective, population-based database designed to capture standardised information on all cochlear implant recipients across the United Kingdom, beginning with England. Data is collected at pre-implant, surgery, 1 year and 5 year intervals, and adverse events recorded at any time. Data includes demographic details, device and surgical factors, audiological outcomes, rehabilitative outcomes, and complications. Contributing clinics submit data through a secure online platform, with built-in quality control and validation checks. Governance was established through collaboration with national health authorities, professional societies, and patient representatives. Early analyses are focussing on data input compliance by centres, monitoring safety signals, and evaluating population-level trends.

Results

Implementation of NRHI demonstrates successful nationwide data capture with high participation rates from implanting centres, enabling benchmarking of outcomes across clinics and highlighting early patterns in device-related complications. Ongoing data collection is supporting the development of quality improvement initiatives and informing evidence-based clinical guidelines.

Conclusion

The establishment of a National Registry of Hearing Implants provides a robust framework for monitoring safety, improving clinical outcomes, and ensuring equitable access to care. National data collection enhances early detection of complications, informs best practices, and strengthens patient safety. The model introduced in the United Kingdom in June 2025 demonstrates the feasibility and value of registry-based approaches to hearing health surveillance.

Wednesday 22 April, 9.00 – 9.25

Building Language Through Interaction:

The Role of Parents in Supporting Deaf Children with Cochlear Implants



Prof Evelien Dirks

Evelien Dirks is a Professor of early development and intervention in deaf and hard-of-hearing children at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. She also serves as Program Director of the Research and Development Department at the Dutch Foundation for Deaf and

Hard-of-Hearing Children (NSDSK) in Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the early development of DHH children and its association with parent-child interactions. She develops materials to support child development, including parent courses, apps, and videos. Evelien is also co-author of the recently published book *Growing Up with Cochlear Implants: Development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children and Adolescents*.

Abstract

Early parent-child interaction plays a crucial role in the development of deaf children with cochlear implants (CIs). High-quality interactions provide the foundation for language learning, socio-emotional development, and successful communication. This presentation focuses on key interactional aspects that are particularly important in supporting development in young deaf children with CIs, including turn-taking, joint attention, parental sensitivity, and levels of directive behaviour. The presentation integrates findings from research and clinical practice and provides practical recommendations for supporting parent-child interaction.

Wednesday 22 April, 9.25 – 9.50

The EPID: Early Parent Interaction with Deaf Children

A New Tool Co-Produced with Parents



Dr Martina Curtin

Dr Martina Curtin is a postdoctoral researcher, lecturer, and a highly specialist Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). She works as the Clinical Lead SLT for Deaf Children and Young People at Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, London and as a

Lecturer on the SLT BSc and MSc programmes at City St George's, University of London.

Abstract

Since 2016, Dr Curtin has been in a continual stream of fellowship funding from the National Institute for Health Research (UK) to develop clinical research skills. The EPID project, based at City St George's University of London, includes 16 hearing parents of deaf children and 8 hearing and deaf professionals, working with Martina as research collaborators. One of the main tasks of the involvement group is to co-produce the tool and training materials, ensuring the tool is accepted and seen as useful by parents and professionals alike. The EPID project has won two awards for its levels of coproduction and Dr Curtin now assists the National Deaf Children's Society as a coproduction consultant on their national Community Connector program.

Wednesday 22 April, 9.50 – 10.15

Infant Mental Health:

Promoting Positive Relationships and Self-Esteem for Deaf Children



Dr Leah Cronin

Dr Leah Cronin is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead of the Infant Mental Health Team, Mini Minds Matter, in NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

Dr Cronin also chairs the national Infant Mental Health forum. She is mother to a four-year-old little girl who is a proud cochlear implant user, dog lover and excellent bike rider.

Abstract

Why is understanding infant mental health crucial for supporting the lifelong mental health of deaf people? Why should we focus on the messaging around the first 2000 days of life? How can attachment theory, personal reflection and empathy help us to support very early infant parent relationships where an infant is deaf, and a parent is hearing, as they navigate the road to implantation? This talk will explore the impact of deafness and hearing technology on early relationship connections from both my professional experience as an infant mental health Consultant Clinical Psychologist and my personal perspective as mother to a deaf child who is a cochlear implant user.

Wednesday 22 April, 11.35 – 12.00

Perception of Voice Cues and Vocal Emotions in Children and Adults with Cochlear Implants



Prof Deniz Başkent

Deniz Başkent is by training a biomedical engineer and currently a Professor of auditory perception in the Audiology Group of UMCG, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Deniz has had the great opportunity to do research both on cochlear implants, starting from

her PhD studies with Bob Shannon, House Ear Institute and USC, and on hearing aids, as a research scientist at the Starkey Hearing Research Center, both in the USA. This broad perspective on hearing devices helped Deniz establish the dB SPL Lab at UMCG in the Netherlands, where researchers from expertise in engineering, neuroscience, psychology, linguistics, and even robotics and music, work closely together to better understand the effects of hearing loss, its interactions with other factors such as device processing, development, or aging, and what solutions could help with increasing quality of life. In addition to research, Deniz also enjoys being an educator and gaining insight from students, and being an active research community member, for example, through her roles as an editor at Trends in Hearing and Journal of Speech, Language, Hearing Research, and a member of the Speech and P&P Technical Committees of the Acoustical Society of the America.

Abstract

Cochlear implant (CI) research and clinical assessment have been primarily based on measures of speech perception, commonly measured in intelligibility of words and sentences. Other aspects of speech, not yet part of typical clinical assessments, can also be important for speech communication. For example, a speaker's voice conveys acoustic cues essential for recognizing the speaker's identity, as well as their emotions. Research from our and other labs have shown that both (mostly postlingual) adult and (mostly prelingual) child CI users have in general lower test scores for perception of voice cues and vocal emotions when compared to typical-hearing control groups. However, we further have observed that there could be differences between the child and adult CI users. In some voice perception tests, such as the perception of voice cues measured in sensitivity, and the use of voice cues in multi-talker speech measured in speech-on-speech, child CI users had better test scores than adult CI users. Such an observation implies that the device likely provides some voice cues, and while children perhaps learn these cues as a benefit from neuroplasticity and early implantation, adults seem not. On the other hand, for vocal emotion recognition, no such difference was observed between child and CI users. Having identified these difficulties, we have collaborated with experts on music therapy and piano teaching methods to develop music training tools that could potentially help perception and use of voice cues. In adult CI users, we have seen differential results between the two training approaches. While music therapy seemed to improve vocal emotion perception, piano-based training seemed to improve speech-on-speech perception based on use of voice cues. Overall, there seems difficulties, but also room for improvement, for perception of voice cues and emotions in both adult and child CI users, where targeted diagnostic and rehabilitation tools may make a substantial contribution.

Wednesday 22 April, 13.30 – 14.00

MED-EL UK Ltd.

Company Presentation

New Technologies in Cochlear Implant: Precision Medicine, Robotic and Fully Implantable Device



Prof Philippe Lefebvre

Philippe Lefebvre received his medical degree in 1987 and his PhD in 1991 (University of Liège, Belgium). He was appointed as Professor in 1997 and became chairman and Professor of otorhinolaryngology at the University of Liège in 2002. He did a fellowship in

advanced otology and skullbase surgery at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York (USA). His main interest is otology, skullbase surgery and middle ear and cochlear implant. He is conducting research in the field of the neurobiology of the inner ear with special interests in regeneration of hair cells and auditory neurons, in pharmacotherapy of the inner ear and development of the cochlea.

Abstract

The preservation of residual hearing, especially in low frequencies, has become a central objective in modern cochlear implantation. Recent developments in electrode arrays and minimally invasive surgical techniques have made electroacoustic stimulation possible. Robotic-assisted cochlear implant surgery, particularly using the RobOtol® system, has been introduced to improve the precision and consistency of electrode insertion while minimizing trauma to delicate inner ear structures. However, the insertion of a foreign body into the cochlea may lead to the formation of fibrous tissue or even osteogenesis around the electrode array. These histological changes can alter the electrical parameters of the implant, resulting in increased electrode impedance and potentially affecting long-term auditory outcomes, including speech comprehension.

This study evaluated the impact of robotic-assisted cochlear implant surgery on impedance changes and hearing preservation over time. The results showed that fewer patients experienced significant low-frequency hearing loss after robotic insertion compared to manual insertion (41.67% versus 53.33%). In addition, impedance measurements at the apex of the

electrode array demonstrated less variability and a continuous decreasing trend after robotic surgery, particularly at the first electrode. Lower impedance values were also associated with complete preservation of residual hearing. Speech intelligibility improved over time in patients with preserved hearing regardless of the insertion technique. However, in cases without hearing preservation, patients who underwent robotic surgery continued to show improvement after six months, while performance stagnated in the manual group. After one year, a significant difference was observed in auditory capacity index scores (83% for robotic insertion versus 57% for manual insertion).

Another aspect of this research focused on the relationship between electrode placement and cochlear frequency allocation. The study compared the default frequency mapping assigned at cochlear implant activation with an anatomy-based mapping calculated using OTOPLAN® software. This software determines the tonotopic frequency allocation based on the exact position of each electrode within the cochlear duct. In the thirteen patients included in this analysis, all showed a mismatch between the default and anatomical frequency maps, ranging from 200 Hz to 1100 Hz. A significant inverse relationship was found between the magnitude of the frequency mismatch and auditory performance, as well as the time required to improve speech intelligibility.

Sound quality was also evaluated in patients with single-sided deafness who received cochlear implants. A retrospective study of nineteen patients implanted with MED-EL devices between 2014 and 2023 showed that larger mismatches between default and anatomical frequency allocation were associated with poorer speech intelligibility and lower perceived sound naturalness. Despite this, overall satisfaction remained high among patients.

Finally, advances in cochlear implant technology have led to the development of totally implantable cochlear implants (TICI), designed to improve aesthetics, convenience, and continuous hearing ability without external components. A first-in-human clinical study involving six adults demonstrated substantial improvements in speech perception, with monosyllable recognition increasing from 6.3% pre-operatively to over 70% after one year. These results suggest that robotic surgery, anatomical frequency mapping, and fully implantable systems represent promising future directions for improving cochlear implant outcomes.

Celebrating MED-EL's Pioneering Vision & Hearing Outcome Focus

Join our CEO, Dr. Ingeborg Hochmair, as we showcase MED-EL's latest technologies and patient-centred pathway for best hearing outcomes.



"Together with our collaborators around the world, we will continue working towards our vision of facilitating hearing that is as natural as possible for all those with hearing loss."



- Dr. Ingeborg Hochmair

Wednesday 22 April, 14.00 – 14.25

Intracochlear and Intraneural Intraoperative Stimulation of the Human Auditory Nerve to Measure Auditory Brainstem Responses



Prof Thomas Lennarz

During the last 20 years, in co-operation with other excellent scientists, support by Hannover Medical School and structural funding by the government of Lower Saxony and national research sponsoring organizations, Thomas Lennarz has built up a unique research

structure at MHH, spanning from basic to clinical research and leading into clinical application. The structure comprises building and organizational facilities as well as excellent staff, represented mainly by professorships in the area of hearing research. He strongly believes that all medical research should be driven by the desire to improve medical devices and therapies and provide a benefit for the patient. Medical research thus recruits its research questions from the clinic, provides approaches for better devices and therapies and finally leads to new clinical applications being the origin for new research questions. He is engaged in a broad thematic variety of approaches to improve hearing implants and therapies including:

Atraumatic electrodes and implanting techniques based on structural electrode design, drug release and cellular therapies

Signal processing algorithms for cochlear implants and electroacoustic stimulation

Surgical technologies for the reduction of insertion trauma

Development of an Auditory Midbrain Implant (AMI) and an Auditory Nerve Implant.

Abstract

Research question

Together with several institutes and medical technology companies, we are currently evaluating direct stimulation of the human auditory nerve using a new type of electrical auditory prosthesis: the Auditory Nerve Implant (ANI). This stimulates with a penetrating electrode array that is inserted directly into the auditory nerve [1]. In intraoperative acute experiments, we were able to demonstrate that auditory brainstem responses can be triggered at significantly lower thresholds than with a cochlear implant. This was preceded by experiments with cats and computer simulations that yielded the same results [2]. We also wanted to show that the auditory nerve is not affected by the insertion. The study with $n = 9$ has now been completed.

Methods

Patients who had undergone surgery to remove an acoustic neuroma took part. During this procedure, the cochlea and auditory nerve are exposed, which could be used for our measurements.

First, intracochlear stimulation was performed with a test electrode and auditory brainstem responses were recorded on the skull surface. Subsequently, a 15-channel penetrating electrode array (base area 1×2 mm) was inserted directly into the auditory nerve and stimulated via individual electrodes at different current intensities. The measurement results were then used to create a growth function for each electrode.

Results

The measurement results show that when clear brainstem responses were generated by intracochlear stimulation, clear responses were also generated by intraneural stimulation. In some cases, the intraneural stimulation had lower threshold values by a factor of 10. It should be noted that the functional integrity of the auditory nerves was already severely impaired by the tumors and their removal.

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Wednesday 22 April, 14.45 – 15.20

PANEL

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Jameel Muzaffar – Chair

Please see biography on page 11.

Prof Thomas Lennarz

Please see biography on page 21.

Prof Philippe Lefebvre

Please see biography on page 19.



Prof Douglas Hartley

Douglas Hartley is a Professor of Otolaryngology at Nottingham University and a consultant ENT surgeon at Nottingham University Hospital's NHS Trust, and Chief Medical Officer for Rinri Therapeutics. He qualified with distinction from Newcastle

Medical School in 1995 and was awarded a DPhil from Oxford University in the field of hearing research in 2001. He worked as a Clinical Lecturer at Oxford University, and he was the first recipient of a Wellcome Trust Clinician Scientist Fellowship in Otolaryngology, the second across any surgical specialty. He spent time as a Surgical Fellow at the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre, after becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and completing my higher surgical training in Oxford. He is the lead surgeon for the Nottingham Auditory Implant Program, one of the largest of its kind within the UK. My research team at the NIHR Nottingham Hearing Biomedical Research Centre is interested in the effects of hearing loss on the brain using functional near infrared spectroscopy and he is Chief Investigator for two groundbreaking UK multicentre trials in deafness (COACH and IMPACT trials). He is also employed as Chief Medical Officer for Rinri Therapeutics, leading their clinical strategy towards a first-in-human cell therapy trial for hearing loss.



Marsha Jenkins

Marsha is joint Lead Clinical Scientist at the Paediatric Hearing Implant Centre at St Thomas' Hospital, London.

The centre offers all hearing implants and Marsha also co-ordinates the Bone Conduction & Middle Ear Implant Programme. She has over 20 years'

experience of working in the field, joining the team in 2001. She also co-ordinates the Specialist Microtia & Atresia Clinic, which is a multidisciplinary clinic involving ENT, Plastics, Prosthetics, Maxillo-facial and Audiological professionals.

Marsha has a BSc (Hons) Biochemistry and an MSc in Audiological Science. At the start of 2023 Marsha started a part-time PhD at UCL Ear Institute which is exploring optimising outcomes for children with unilateral hearing loss.

In the spring of 2022, Marsha formed the BSA Bone Conduction & Middle Ear Devices (BCMED) Special Interest Group.

As Chair of this group Marsha combines the research side of her work with her clinical role in the group's current goal; which is to provide guidance documentation for referral, assessment and management of potential candidates who may benefit from these implantable and non-implantable devices. This area of audiology is really evolving, it is a very exciting time for patients and clinicians.

marsha.jenkins2@nhs.net

www.gstt.nhs.uk/auditoryimplants



Prof Nicci Campbell

Nicci Campbell is Professor of Audiology and Joint Associate Dean KEE (FEPS) at the University of Southampton (UoS). She works clinically as an audiologist within the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service (USAIS), alongside her teaching, research and

Faculty leadership role. She established and leads the USAIS auditory implant clinical placement programme for qualified audiologists, set up and coordinates the MSc Auditory Implant module (available as a standalone module), and contributes to teaching across Audiology, Engineering and Speech-Language Therapy, both at UoS and externally. She is service lead for the USAIS self-funded cochlear implant pathway. Over the past decade, her research, PhD supervision and service development initiatives have focused on optimising hearing with both ears; from improving spatial and real-world audiological assessment to enhancing bimodal/bilateral outcomes and remote microphone and assistive listening technology fitting. Her work spans cochlear implants, subarachnoid haemorrhage, and individuals with listening difficulties despite a normal audiogram. She has received awards for her contributions to Audiology, most recently the BSA Honorary Award (Life Membership) in 2025.

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Cochlear Implant Champion Event

The Cochlear Implant (CI) Champion Scheme is a joint initiative between BAA and BCIG, launched in 2019. Its aim is to ensure that all eligible adults and children, and their families, are well informed about cochlear implants and offered a timely referral. The scheme has continued to grow and now includes over 190 CI Champions and 34 CI Mentors nationwide.

A dedicated, multidisciplinary group - spanning adult and paediatric services, a range of roles including CI Champions, CI Mentors and CI Coordinators, and a broad geographical representation - form the BAA/BCIG CI Champion Committee, which oversees the scheme.

The first CI Champion training workshop took place at the 2020 BCIG conference and continues to grow in attendance, with consistently positive feedback. It provides an opportunity for champions to share best practice, exchange ideas, and learn from peers, helping to strengthen confidence and consistency in CI referral pathways across services.

Role of the CI Champion

Awareness

Train, support, and empower colleagues to counsel patients and families about cochlear implants.

Equity

Ensure all eligible patients and families are supported to make informed, shared decisions about referral.

Monitoring

Audit the quality and volume of CI referrals, including the standard of counselling within the service

To access our resources or find out more please scan the QR code to visit the Cochlear Implant Champions Scheme pages on the BAA website.



If you're interested in joining the Cochlear Implant Champions Scheme either as a Champion or a Mentor, to represent a Cochlear Implant centre, please send us your name and your department/service to admin@baaudiology.org

Agenda

Main conference: 10.00 – 11.40	
Session 1: 11.40 – 12.30	
Professional development: How to get the most out of being a CI Champion	Rhian McTaggart
12.30 – 13.30: Lunch (downstairs with main conference)	
Session 2: 13.30 – 14.30	
Service development: CI referral Audit complete. What next?	CI Champion
Confident CI conversations	Petrina Checkland & Deanne Jayewardene-Aston
14.30 – 15.00: Coffee break (served upstairs)	
Session 3: 15.00 – 16.30	
Manufacturers workshop	Advanced Bionics Cochlear MED-EL
16.30 – 17.15: Posters and prosecco	

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Cochlear Implant Rehab Champions Event

We are excited to host the first ever Cochlear Implant Rehabilitation Champions day as part of the BCIG 2026 conference. This day will bring together Speech and Language Therapists and Teacher's of the Deaf to develop a specialist knowledge of cochlear implants, care pathways and rehab techniques for CI users.

Agenda

9.00 – 10.35	Main plenary	
10.35 – 11.05	Coffee break	
11.05 – 11.30	Posters and exhibitions	
11.30 – 12.30	Session 1	
	Articulating the specialism: BATOD doc	Gayle Leeson
	Complex Care Resource Pack	Helen Peebles
	Speech testing app for Deaf children – call for participants	Caroline Leal
	Company rehab presentations	MED-EL
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 15.00	Session 2	
	Company rehab presentations	Advanced Bionics Cochlear
	Discussion from Rehab CI Champions: What would a national Rehab CI Champions network look like?	Martin Ramsay (chair), Chris Rocca, Petrina Checkland, Annemarie Marley, Gayle Leeson
	The Elizabeth Foundation	Julie Hughes
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee break	
15.30 – 16.30	Session 3	
	Panel discussion: What does 'good rehab' look like in real life?	Gayle Leeson (chair), Chris Rocca, Lise Henderson, Helen Peebles, Julie Hughes, Martin Ramsay
	Summary and close	

2026 Graham Fraser Travel Grants

The Trustees of the Graham Fraser Foundation invite applications from non-medical BCIG members for a travel grant for attendance at a national or international conference, short course or observership in another cochlear implant unit.

Applicants should submit by email details of the proposed venture, level of support requested and curriculum vitae to:

The Graham Fraser Foundation

c/o Mr Philip Robinson, Chairman

Email gffchairman@gmail.com

Website www.grahamfraserfoundation.org.uk

Closing date for applications 30th September 2026



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Join the BCIG: Advancing excellence in auditory implants

The BCIG is a unique group of health care professionals and other interested parties in auditory implant provision in the UK. The BCIG believes that if a patient meets the criteria for a cochlear implant as specified in the NICE Guidance, funding for that treatment must be provided by the appropriate healthcare commissioning body following a positive assessment by the specialist cochlear implant centre.

Join us!

Full membership

This is open to anyone residing in the United Kingdom (UK) and Eire with a role in the field of auditory implants, OR who is actively involved in research into auditory implants, OR who represents other allied non-commercial organisations.

Student membership

This non-voting membership is open to students on accredited training courses relevant to the field of auditory implants. Proof of educational status will be requested at registration and renewal.

Overseas membership

This non-voting membership is open to those residing outside of the UK with roles parallel to those eligible for full membership.

Complete the membership request form at:

www.bcig.org.uk/join

Please contact BCIG via info@bcig.org.uk regarding Corporate membership opportunities.

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¹Sentio implant and sound processor physical features and comparison to other devices (Doc-00123204)
²Sentio study BC101 summary (Doc-00123384)

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