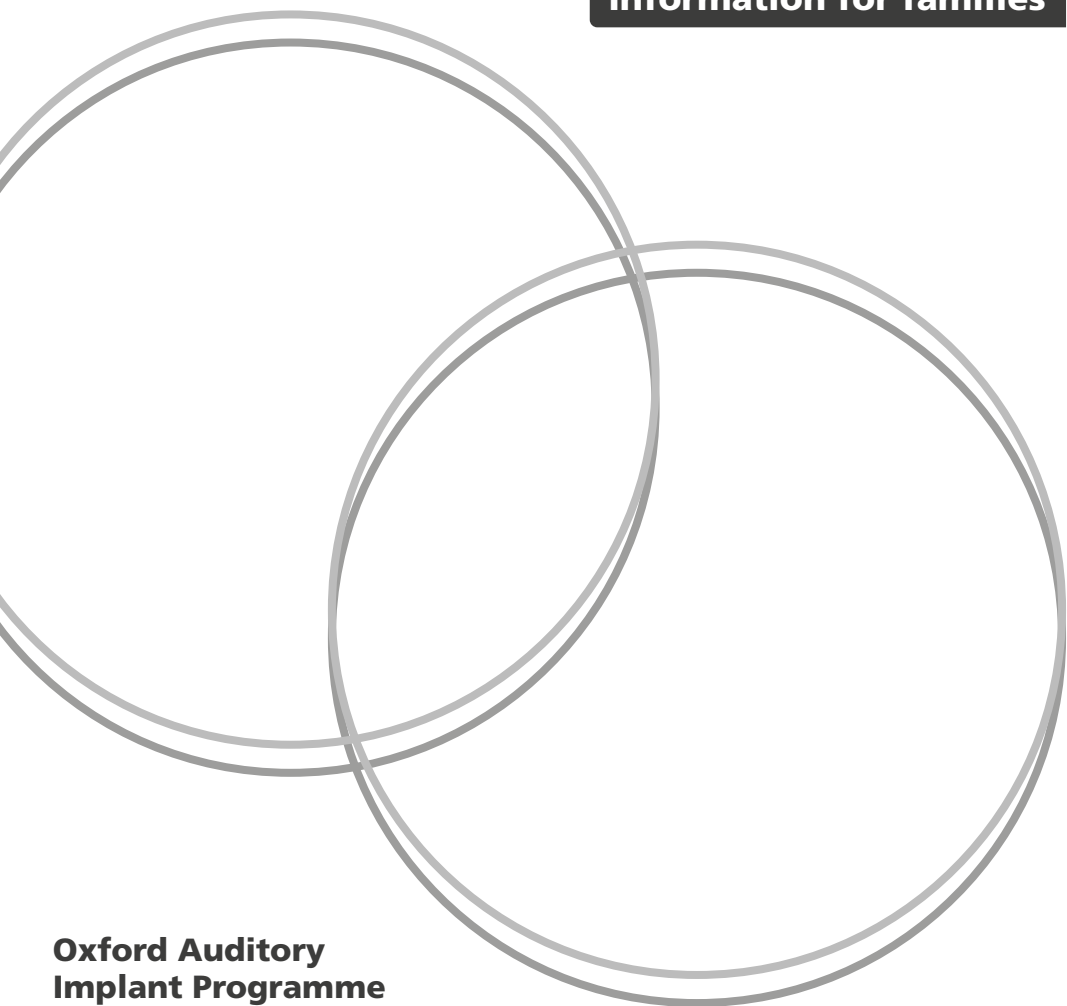




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cochlear Implant Decision Clinic Rehabilitation

Information for families



**Oxford Auditory
Implant Programme**

Cochlear implant surgery is the first step. After this, the important work begins. We will support and guide you to help your child get the best possible benefit from their cochlear implants.

Auditory input – “Eyes open Ears on”

Hearing is one of our main senses. Children need to hear sounds often so their brains can learn what sounds mean.

After surgery, your child will have several hospital visits to tune their cochlear implant. This is called **mapping**. The audiologist slowly makes sounds clearer and louder so your child can get used to hearing again.

It is important to work closely with your audiologist to achieve the best possible programme, known as a map. After a few appointments, the audiologist may be happy with the settings, even if your child’s responses are still developing. This is normal, as learning to hear takes time. The rehabilitation team will work with you to help your child build listening skills during this stage.

Research and experience show that children benefit most when they feel comfortable wearing their processors from the start. Wearing the processors for **8 hours or more each day** helps the brain make sense of sound as quickly as possible.

Studies show that the age at which a child begins wearing their cochlear implants full time is often a stronger predictor of language development than the age at which they had surgery. We will support you to achieve consistent daily use as early as possible.

Time factor

For children that have not yet developed speech, the first **three and a half years of life** are a critical period for language development. During this time, the brain is especially ready to learn from sound.

Every sound your child hears helps strengthen listening pathways in the brain. Talking, singing, and playing with sound all support brain development.

Parental involvement

Parents are the most important people in a child's life. You know your child best and play a vital role in their progress.

You support your child by:

- Bringing them to appointments
- Encouraging consistent processor use
- Talking, playing, and interacting every day
- Trying different strategies
- Working with a range of professionals

Research shows that children who hear many words in their early years are more likely to develop strong communication skills, find reading easier, and do well at school. Listening is the foundation for language.

Increasing processor wearing time increases the number of words your child hears each day. The quality and consistency of your talking also make a big difference.

Rehabilitation

"We hear with our brains – the ears are just the way in." (Carol Flexer 2016)

Our rehabilitation team includes a Teacher of the Deaf and Specialist Speech and Language Therapists. We will help you learn practical strategies to support listening and spoken language during everyday activities.

We will:

- Monitor your child's progress
- Support next steps
- Help solve any challenges along the way

Our team includes qualified Auditory Verbal Therapists, and we work with families using a range of communication approaches, including British Sign Language (BSL). Our aim is to support your child's overall communication in the best way for your family.

Appointments are available face to face or by video call. We also work closely with your local professionals to ensure joined-up care.

Ways to help

Create a good listening environment

Reduce background noise such as TVs, radios, and household appliances where possible.

Build strong routines

Put the processors on first thing in the morning to maximise listening time.

Stay close when talking

Talking nearer to the processor microphones helps your child hear your voice more clearly.

For Younger listeners:

Use a variety of sounds

Play with musical instruments, tap on tables, and use fun voice sounds like “uh oh”, “woof”, or “weeee”.

Share books together

Repetition is helpful. Let your child turn pages, lift flaps, or make animal sounds. You don't need to read all the words.

Talk throughout the day

Describe what is happening and what will happen next, for example, “You look tired, it's time for a nap.”

Sing and enjoy music

Simple songs, rhymes, and actions make listening fun and meaningful.

Programme contact details

Oxford Auditory Implant Programme

Audiology Department

Level LG1

West Wing

John Radcliffe Hospital

Headley Way Oxford

OX3 9DU

Tel: **01865 234 881** (Auditory Implant Enquiries)

Email: **auditoryimplantprogramme@ouh.nhs.uk**

Website:

www.ouh.nhs.uk/audiology/services/auditory-implant-programme/

Resources

www.cicsgroup.org.uk

www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/childhood-deafness/hearing-aids-and-implants/cochlear-implants/switch-on/

www.hearingfirst.org/what-to-do

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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April 2026
Review: April 2029
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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