

New beginnings

This will be our last Bulletin as Cambridgeshire Hearing Help CIO (CHH) before we transfer our people, services and assets to Cambridgeshire Deaf Association (CDA) on 31st March 2022.

Please know that because of how and when we are undertaking this 'merger' it allows for our staff and volunteers (and funds) to transfer and continue providing the highly valued hearing aid maintenance services that firstly CAMTAD and since 2014, CHH developed and have provided locally over decades.

I, though, will only be temporarily transferring to CDA and will then hand over to their CEO Andrew Palmer. This is therefore a time of reflection, acknowledgments and thanks before I move on.

I am delighted to have been CEO of CHH, if only for a year in the end and during Covid-19. During this time I have very much appreciated the connectivity and rewards of working with such a dedicated small staff team, so many volunteers, a Board of Trustees and with our partners with whom we serve our local communities. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the pleasure I have had in leading such a highly valued local charity that serves thousands of people in the County who have NHS hearing aids. I am only sorry that due to Covid I was unable to meet more of our volunteers and beneficiaries.

Thank you particularly to our GP Trustee, staff, volunteers and our venues for embracing and embedding Covid-safe Addenbrooke's Audiology service approved procedures so that we could return to local communities and residential homes as soon as we have. I know our beneficiaries are incredibly grateful that we have re-emerged even during the Pandemic to re-instate our services so people could regain their hearing and thereby quality of life.

This is why we always receive excellent responses to our satisfaction surveys as well as impromptu feedback. I therefore wish to share an email that has arrived while I am writing to you, just to remind all our readers of just how highly valued the services you provide are:

"My mother had her hearing aid cleaned recently in Girton. I saw her last week which was the first time since it had been done and wow, what an improvement in her hearing! My dad organises her appointments but has a lot on his plate as mum sadly has dementia and is registered blind."

"I wondered how frequently it is advised that they are cleaned please? If I know, I hope that maybe I can help him work out a plan and remind him well in advance to book future appointments!"

"Thank you - and thank you for providing such a wonderful service."

Fiona Kerr

CEO

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February 25th was **Cochlear Implant Day**, celebrating this important technology that is a life changing hearing break-through for people with hearing loss. Around 1,260 people receive a cochlear implant in England every year. They are available to people who get little benefit from conventional hearing aids and are available on the NHS under English NICE guidelines to people with severe to profound deafness (as defined as hearing only sounds that are louder than 80 dB HL (pure-tone audiometric threshold equal to or greater than 80 dB HL) at two or more frequencies (500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, 2,000 Hz, 3,000 Hz and 4,000 Hz) bilaterally without acoustic hearing aids. Most people will only be eligible for one NHS implant with exceptions for children and people with dual sensory loss.

The cochlear implant stimulates the auditory nerve by electrical signals. This increases the range of audible frequencies enabling a user to improve speech recognition amongst other sounds. Electro Acoustic Hearing Implant Systems combine a hearing aid with a cochlear implant to give a hybrid system, enabling the aid to support, where there is some residual sound in the lower frequencies, and the implant to supply the higher frequencies.

However, the **RNID** report that there is low take-up of this technology, despite the evidence that they make a significant contribution to improved quality of life. For the potential user it is quite a big leap from using a hearing aid to having an operation to implant the receiver under the skin and relearning how to process sound with the help of the new technology. The sound does not completely replicate natural sound and it takes time to adapt to this, as the brain begins to adjust. Specialist therapists support this process. Audiologists need to be aware of what is available and help patients to decide whether this is suitable for them.

I have met several people who have greatly benefitted from cochlear implants, and it is reassuring to know that we have the specialist Emmeline Centre at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Let's celebrate the amazing technological advances and encourage anyone who might gain better sound to discuss the options with their specialists.

Deafness and hearing loss services are still under pressure in other parts of the UK. In Scotland there is a report of severe shortcomings in the Deaf Children's Service. The problem seems to have arisen through a failure to effectively diagnose children's conditions at an early stage, meaning they did not get the help and support they needed early in life to support communication. This is a tragic situation for the children and family involved as the development of language is critical at an early stage of life.

North Staffordshire is still rationing hearing aids. It has agreed to support people with moderate hearing loss with free NHS aids but unlike elsewhere in the UK, it is refusing aids to people with mild hearing loss. Other NHS health providers are keeping this under review. With cost in the NHS spiralling, it may be that hearing aids are again seen as a soft target for cost cutting.

Finally, I wish everyone the best in the transition to Cambridgeshire Deaf Association and I look forward to working with the new merged charity.

Frances

Celebrating Volunteers

We were delighted to present 10-year volunteering awards to Barrie (with Gaynor), Liz and Alan. Thank you for your all your hard work and continued support!



We know that Cambridgeshire Deaf Association are looking forward to warmly welcoming our transferring staff, volunteers and Trustees. At this time it's important to us all and our beneficiaries to know that our dedicated staff and volunteers will continue to provide services for NHS hearing aid users across local Cambridgeshire communities and by post.

This is possible because so many volunteers have returned and continue to enable us to provide Covid-safe services through 17 Hearing Aid Maintenance centres and increasingly to residential home residents. We really do appreciate your time and support.

We also wish to thank those of you who are willing to re-join our team as we re-establish services in your area. We do know that some volunteers are choosing not to return and we want to thank you for all the years of service you have provided to local residents in your communities.

Lastly, we must recognise the Board of Trustees including our Chair Paul McCloskey, Dr Stuart Findlay and our particularly long-serving and contributory Treasurer Bob Andrews.

Lip-reading Classes

We are very pleased to be resuming our lip-reading classes at St Andrews Street Baptist Church in Cambridge from April (term-time only). We currently have space available in our Monday classes at 10.30am to 11.30am, starting 25th April. If you would like to join, please contact us on 01223 416141.

Batteries by Post

If you would like batteries to be posted to you, please use our online [battery request service](#) or leave a telephone message clearly stating your name, full address including postcode and what SIZE battery you require: this will be 312 Brown, 13 Orange or 675 Blue.



You can also collect batteries in person from any one of our Hearing Aid Maintenance Centres, without the need for an appointment. Please drop in during our HAM Centre opening hours and we will issue them to you. Alternatively, you can pick-up batteries from the [Cambridgeshire Mobile Library](#), which visits 85 villages and communities throughout the county.

Hearing Aid Maintenance Centres

We have opened 17 Hearing Aid Maintenance (HAM) Centres, where you can go to get your NHS hearing aids cleaned and retubed, and to collect batteries. This is a 'drop off and wait' service by appointment only. However, if you require batteries only, you can now collect them from any one of our HAM Centres, without the need to make an appointment.

Our 2022 dates are as follows:

- **Cambourne Hub** 1st Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
Cambourne Hub, High St, Great Cambourne, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6GW
- **Chatteris Library** 2nd Friday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
Chatteris Library, 2 Furrowfields Road, Chatteris PE16 6DY
- **Comberton Sheltered Housing Centre** 3rd Tuesday of the month, 2pm – 3.30pm
Sheltered Housing Centre, Nursery Way (off Barrons Way), Comberton CB23 7EL
- **Cottenham Community Centre**, 2nd Thursday of the month, 2pm – 4pm
Community Centre, 250A High Street, Cottenham CB24 8RZ
- **Ely Library** 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
Ely Library, 6 The Cloisters, Ely CB7 4ZH
- **Fulbourn Library** 3rd Thursday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
The Swifts Meeting Room & Library, Haggis Gap, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD
- **Gamlingay Baptist Church** 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10am – 11.30am
Gamlingay Baptist Church, Stocks Lane, Gamlingay SG19 3JR
- **Girton Baptist Church** 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2pm – 4pm
Baptist Church, 103 High Street, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0QQ
- **Great Shelford Free Church** 1st Thursday of the month, 10am – 12 noon. **No session in June.**
Great Shelford Free Church, Ashen Green, Shelford CB22 5EY
- **Huntingdon Library** 4th Tuesday of the month, 10.30am – 12pm. **No session in December.**
Huntingdon Library, Princes Street, Huntingdon PE29 3PA
- **Meadows Community Centre** 4th Thursday of the month, 10am – 11.30am
Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catharine's Road, Arbury, Cambridge CB4 3XJ
- **Melbourn Community Centre** 4th Thursday of the month, 2pm – 4pm. **No session in May.**
Vicarage Close Community Room, Melbourn SG8 6DY
- **St Ives Library** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
St Ives Library, 4 Library Row, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BW
- **St Neots Library** 4th Wednesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon. **No session in December.**
St Neots Library, Priory Lane, St Neots PE19 2BH
- **Sawston Community Hall** 3rd Monday of the month, 10am – 12 noon. **No session in April.**
Chapelfield Way Community Hall, Sawston CB22 3GB
- **Soham Library** 1st Monday of the month, 10am – 12 noon. **No session in May.**
Soham Library, 5/7 Clay Street, Soham CB7 5HJ
- **Whittlesey Library** 4th Monday of the month, 2pm – 3.30pm. **No session in December.**
Whittlesey Library, 31-35 Market Lane, Whittlesey PE7 1BA

This is a drop-off and wait service, by appointment only.

To book an appointment at a HAM Centre or to request batteries by post, please visit our website www.cambridgeshirehearinghelp.org.uk or telephone the office on: 01223 416141.