

Monica Sherratt's story

I am writing in connection with the relaxation of the strict criteria which has held me back unnecessarily on my journey towards getting a CI. The problem with me has been that my hearing is worse for low frequency than for high frequency. The criteria is based on high frequency loss. I was first put forward as a candidate for a CI by the Hearing Therapist and Chief Audiologist at Gloucester Hospital in 2014. I had tests at Bristol and was accepted by the CI Team there for an implant provided it was approved by the Funding Panel. I did not meet their criteria and therefore was turned down. I wrote to my local MP who had a go at taking the matter up for me but he too drew a blank.



The good news is that I have now had an implant. Eventually my high frequency deteriorated sufficiently for me to qualify which has meant that my hearing loss by the time of the implant was making life very hard for me.

I have belonged to Gloucester Deafened and Cochlear Implant Support Group for seven years and it has been a great help to me to be able to discuss progress with others who have had implants and because of this I have not needed any further help preparing for the operation. I am now 84 and have spent four years suffering unnecessarily and increasingly because of the ruling which the Consultant at Bristol knew was unfair. Apparently because I am in the minority it seemed I was not worth considering. I was told by the Audiologist in Bristol that in her 25 years experience she had only come across one other case like mine.

The longed for day arrived and at the time of writing I was switched on four days ago, since when I have been in the land of Donald Duck! The sound at first was so funny I burst out laughing, or rather quacking! Then with the realisation that this duck in my head could talk and converse with the other ducks I was in tears at the implications. The audiologist was ready with tissues. This frequently happens. She assured me that everything I was experiencing was normal and good so off I went armed with training instructions and another appointment for re-tuning in just over a week's time. Now I am beginning to enter the real world again but although my pal Donald Duck is helping me to hear I shall be grateful when he is able to leave me. I feel confident about the future but it is hard work and tiring.

I can't speak highly enough about the treatment I have had in Bristol. The surgeon did a first class operation and the whole CI team is wonderful, full of smiles and encouragement. I feel very blessed already although I still have a long way to go.