

Townsville Hospital and Health Service audiology service review

Information for families

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service has commenced a clinical review into paediatric audiology services (children's hearing) at Townsville University Hospital (TUH).

These services include follow-up care of newborn hearing screens and cochlear implants.

Follow-up care of newborn hearing screens

Some babies referred to Townsville University Hospital's audiology service after their newborn hearing screen may not have received the standard of care we'd like to see.

We will be contacting all families whose baby required follow-up care after their newborn hearing screen.

If your baby did not require follow-up care, there is no reason for concern.

Cochlear implants

We have also taken steps to look at cochlear implant programming in children at Townsville University Hospital following recent cases in South Australia where cochlear implants have been mapped incorrectly.

With support from Children's Health Queensland (CHQ) we are reviewing children who received a cochlear implant at TUH and/or had their cochlear implant mapped/programmed at TUH.

How long will it take to complete this review?

Each child's care must be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

In Queensland, we have a very small pool of expert audiologists and we have called on all of these experts to help us.

We expect the review of follow-up care of newborn hearing screens will be completed by the end of June and the care of children with a cochlear implant by mid-May.

How many patients are affected?

We have been working with CHQ to conduct a full audit of 341 babies who required follow up after their newborn hearing screen test. This only relates to babies who were referred after 1 January 2020.

Since we began this service in 2014, 59 children have received a cochlear implant or have had their implant managed by this service. All families of these children will be contacted.

Is there going to be an investigation into this?

Yes. An independent external review with consumer input will look into how this situation occurred, and what changes need to be made. At the moment our first priority is patient safety and ensuring that all those affected are contacted.

Who can I make a complaint to?

Families who wish to make a formal complaint have several options.

They may wish to do this through our Patient Feedback Service:

Email:

THHS-Feedback@health.qld.gov.au

Phone:

(07) 4433 1074 (Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm)

Or by contacting the Office of the Health Ombudsman:

Online: www.oho.qld.gov.au

Phone: 133 646

Should I remove my child's sound processor or make changes to how it functions?

No. These concerns only relate to the programming of your child's implant.

There have been no concerns identified about the surgical implantation or manufacturing of the device your child is wearing. Your child should continue wearing their sound processor as usual.

If your child requires further follow up, we will arrange an appointment to discuss this and make necessary changes to your child's device. We will also outline the next steps that may be required.

What should people do if they are concerned?

If we have concerns about the care your child has received through our audiology unit, you will be contacted.

We understand that this is a difficult and distressing time.

If you would like to clarify information or raise concerns about your child's hearing, please don't hesitate to phone 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or (07) 4433 7902.