

# Faster access to surgery to reduce hearing loss – Vaughan Gething

The waiting time targets for adult cochlear implant surgery will be reduced to 26 weeks for standard cases and 36 weeks for complex cases. The Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee (WHSSC) will work with health boards to introduce the new referral to treatment (RTT) targets in a phased approach over the next three years.

This is a significant cut to the current 52 week target for RTT, which was set by the WHSSC. The reduced 26 week RTT target for standard implant surgery will bring the adult target in line with the RTT target for children.

There are specialised Cochlear Implant service providers, located in at University Hospital Wales in Cardiff and in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, North Wales. These services are planned and commissioned by the WHSSC.

A cochlear implant is a medical device that can replace the function of the inner ear. This surgery can enable profoundly deaf people to hear again and therefore has a significant impact on the quality of people's lives.

The Health Secretary said:

“We want to ensure that people who need cochlear implants are able to have surgery as soon as possible, so their hearing can be improved or restored.

“For many people deafness can have a significant impact on their quality of life, affecting employment, recreation and relationships.

“Restoring people's hearing with cochlear implants as soon as possible will help people who are deaf or hard of hearing to lead more normal lives again.”