



Public Funding for Cochlear Implant Services in the Southern Region – Adult Patients

Referral and Assessment

Adults seeking access to a publicly funded cochlear implant must undergo a First Specialist Assessment (FSA) at the cochlear implant programme, at which time candidacy for a cochlear implant will be assessed. The FSA is done according to Ministry of Health guidelines.

Criteria for Assessment - Adults

The programme accepts referrals of adults over 19 years who:

- Have bilateral moderate to profound sensorineural hearing loss (i.e. ≥ 90 dBHL at 2000Hz and above for better ear) including ski slope or reverse losses
- Derive no significant benefit from well-fitted hearing aids (60% or less on HINT sentences, and/or 30% on CNC words, in quiet)
- Have been medically cleared for surgery
- In order to qualify for public funding are New Zealand citizens or have permanent residence

Referral must be made from an Audiologist or ENT surgeon. If you are unsure, have your GP or specialist contact us for advice about referral.

Determining Eligibility for a Funded Cochlear Implant

Eligibility criteria for an assessment and eligibility for a publicly funded cochlear implant are different. After assessment, the clinical team at the cochlear implant programme will determine your eligibility for a publicly funded cochlear implant.

Eligibility for publicly funded treatment is the same across New Zealand and based on a Clinical Priority Access Criteria (CPAC) tool, which produces a CPAC score. A CPAC score can only be calculated by the cochlear implant assessing team. In order to be wait-listed for a funded implant, patients must meet a funding threshold via the CPAC score. The threshold for wait-listing may change over time as funding dictates.

Patients with a CPAC score that doesn't meet the funding threshold are not eligible for public treatment. You will be referred back to your local service provider with advice for management of your hearing loss. This may include a review of hearing aids, referral to a Hearing Therapist, the provision of assistive devices such as FM systems, and other community supports.

What factors are considered in calculating the CPAC score?

The CPAC score is based on individual circumstances in the following areas:

- The onset, progression, and prior treatment of the underlying hearing loss

- The presence of a vision loss in addition to hearing loss
- Work, education, and care-giver responsibilities
- The effect of the hearing loss on a person's quality of life and mental health



What if my circumstances change?

Patients may request a review of their CPAC score if their circumstances change, including those who initially do not meet the eligibility threshold for a funded implant. A change in circumstances may include a significant change in hearing, greater difficulty at work, in education, or at home. A request for a review of your clinical prioritization score should be supported by information from your GP or other health care provider.

Waiting Times

Once the CPAC threshold has been achieved, patients are placed on to a waiting list. The waiting time may be up to 18 months. This waiting time may vary depending on the availability of funding. The CPAC score can be reviewed if circumstances change.

Private Options

Patients who are either ineligible for publicly funded services or who wish to avoid public waiting times are welcome to consider privately funded treatment at any time. Some people consider this once they are eligible and waiting for publicly funded treatment, while others do not want to wait until they become eligible.

Referrals should be sent to:

The Clinical Coordinator
Southern Cochlear Implant Programme
249 Papanui Road
Christchurch 8014
FAX. 03 355 3045
Email: gillian.nicolle@scip.co.nz