Abstract:
In recent years hearing preservation surgical techniques have allowed children with partial hearing to be considered for cochlear implantation. In the UK, such children are likely to have profound high frequency hearing loss, within current NICE guidance, with much better hearing in the low frequencies. These children are often reported to be "doing well" with their hearing aids, yet audiological, speech & language testing, and academic progress may suggest otherwise.

Early intervention is an established principle of cochlear implantation for congenitally deaf children. Yet there can be concerns around offering cochlear implants to young children with partial hearing. These concerns, along with trying to confirm ‘sufficient’ benefit from hearing aids can make early referral, assessment and counselling more challenging for this client group than for children with greater levels of hearing loss.

Cochlear implants can have a positive impact on outcomes for children with partial hearing especially with regards to speech production. Delaying intervention is likely to result in poorer outcomes such as unclear speech and intermittent or non-use of the cochlear implant. A multidisciplinary team investigation including audiological assessment, baseline speech and language assessment, and language review following therapy support is required for timely confirmation that cochlear implants will provide benefit compared to hearing aids alone.

Biography
Marette Ambler is an Audiological Scientist at The Midlands Hearing Implant Programme – Children’s Service, which is part of Birmingham Children’s Hospital, Birmingham, UK. With over 15 years’ commitment to the field of paediatric cochlear implants, Marette has been a member of the team in Birmingham since 2002.

Marette read Physics with Acoustics (BSc) at Surrey University, and Audiology (MSc) at Southampton University before completing her clinical scientist training in 1998.

Marette has a strong interest in supporting parents to develop the language and communication of their deaf children through the combination of the latest hearing technologies coupled with a robust diagnostic therapy program. In addition to supporting the clinical and research activities of the MHIP team, Marette has a particular interest in CIs for children with Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder, and hearing preservation CI surgery in children with residual hearing.