

We are RNID: the national charity supporting the 18 million people in the UK who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. **This is our strategy.**



**RN
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Supporting people
who are deaf, have
hearing loss or tinnitus



Hearing loss, deafness and tinnitus affect 1 in 3 of us in the UK today. It's a huge community of people who face barriers in almost every area of life. If our work at RNID doesn't directly impact you, it will almost certainly be making a difference for someone you know and love.

We have a proud history. We're over 100 years old, with a heritage brand; but we're a modern, digital first charity fully focused on what we need to do today, and well into the future.

RNID is a truly UK-wide force, and our strategy is focused on making the biggest impact possible for our 18 million strong community.

Our work is structured around four well researched and evidenced programmes of work: inclusion, health, employment and bio-medical research. These four areas of focus are deeply interlinked and mutually supportive, driven by our research into the real-life priorities of people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus.

This document sets out our bold, ambitious strategy.



What you won't find here is a tick-box list of deliverables. Instead, we hope you'll find a strategy document that explains **why** we are doing what we're doing, and highlights some of the big wins we're working towards on our way to a fully inclusive society. Our approach gives us a solid foundation for every decision we make, and a clear workstream for coming years, but allows us to flex to meet the demands of a real world that is complicated and rapidly changing.

The need for this work is huge. Our ambition matches it. Our strategy outlines the change we want to see in the world. But we can only do that in partnership with others, and collaboration is core to everything we do. We hope that whether you are reading this as a partner, supporter or a member of our communities, you can see solid areas of work where you can join us, and make a difference for the 1 in 3 adults in the UK we're here to support.



Explainer: what is a theory of change?

Each of our programmes has a fully evidenced theory of change. But what is a theory of change?

It's a tried and tested approach to setting out **how** and **why** our work will move us from where we are now, to where we want to be.

For each theory of change, we looked at all the available external evidence and research, as well as our own expertise. We used that to set out how we think we can most effectively make big positive changes for our communities.

Our theories of change are the centre of our decision-making about what we as RNID should – and should not – be doing, and they guide our practical delivery plans across the organisation.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME ONE: INCLUSION

People who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus should be able to enjoy access to the same information, spaces, products and services as anyone else.

That's simply not the case right now. Our communities face barriers at every turn, and an acute lack of awareness from the general public on how to include them in everyday life.

We are working to make life fully inclusive for our communities, and transform public understanding and attitudes in the process.

Our inclusion theory of change in a nutshell:

Our goal is to create a society in which people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus are treated fairly, included and have equal access to information, spaces, products and services.



To do this, we provide information, influence and campaign, collaborate across sectors, build our evidence base and connect with our communities so that:

- The general public are deaf aware and act in an inclusive way
- People who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus can connect with others
- Our communities feel confident navigating the world around them
- New information, spaces, products and services are designed to be accessible from the outset – and existing ones are improved
- New ways to improve accessibility, including new technologies, are developed and rolled out
- How well our communities are being included is monitored and reviewed.



This is a long-term, strategic programme of work. And here are some of the major milestones we want to see happen on the way:

- ✓ New technology like Auracast is integrated into public spaces, and everyone who needs one can get a Bluetooth-enabled hearing aid on the NHS to tap into those systems
- ✓ The Media Bill is fully implemented, meaning everyone can access high quality subtitled TV content and join in the national conversations
- ✓ Our public polling tells us that the vast majority of people feel confident communicating with people who are deaf or have hearing loss
- ✓ We have built partnerships with major banking and retail groups to make everyday services accessible to our communities
- ✓ Government communications are inclusive – ensuring deaf BSL users get the information at the same time as everyone else
- ✓ Create a step-change in how accessible public services are to our communities, including the services that support people to access employment and benefits
- ✓ We have a powerful group of influencers in the media who talk openly about their deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus, changing the narrative and challenging stereotypes

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME TWO: HEALTH

Looking after our hearing health needs to be much higher up the national agenda.

We'll help people identify their hearing loss early on, and make it easier for them to take action sooner. We'll make sure everyone gets high quality audiology care and treatments (like good hearing aids) when they need them.

And we'll get rid of the barriers deaf people face in getting access to healthcare of all kinds.

Our health theory of change in a nutshell:

Our goal is to live in a society where everyone has good hearing health, and people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus don't face barriers in getting good general healthcare.



To do this we provide information and direct services on hearing health – both online and in person – as well as influencing, campaigning and collaborating with health professionals, the NHS, academics, business and more. We think this will mean that:

- People take action to protect their hearing and get help when they need it
- People get the audiology support that they need
- People who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus get the best possible healthcare across all health conditions



This is a long-term, strategic programme of work. And here are some of the major milestones we want to see happen on the way:

- ✓ Hearing checks are included in the national NHS health checks from age 40
- ✓ Services to remove excess ear wax – a major cause of pain and hearing issues - are available for free on the NHS in all areas of the UK
- ✓ All health professionals have access to resources from RNID that clearly tell them how to fulfil their duty under the accessible information standards towards people who are deaf or have hearing loss
- ✓ Our website offers the public a simple online tool to help people protect their hearing, at any age
- ✓ We have convened a group of innovators to reimagine how we support good hearing health in the UK, piloting new ideas and sharing thought leadership

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME THREE: EMPLOYMENT

12 million working-age people in the UK have hearing loss. There's a huge amount of talent and skill in that statistic – talent that's all-too-often left unused by employers because of a lack of knowledge, and inaccessible workplace cultures and practices.

Deaf people, and people with hearing loss or tinnitus, have a right to access jobs in the same way as everyone else. But at the moment there's an 'employment gap' for our communities. We want to close that gap.

We'll help leaders understand how to recruit and support people in their organisations, helping everyone to be fully part of the team and able to excel.

Our employment theory of change in a nutshell:

Our goal is to get rid of the employment gap for deaf people, and make sure that people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus can obtain, retain and thrive in employment on an equal basis to others.



To do that we provide services and consultancy to employers on hearing loss, giving them the information and support they need to connect to our communities. Over the longer term, we believe that this will mean that:

- Employers proactively recruit, retain and support people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus in their workforce
- People who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus are empowered to succeed in employment



This is a long-term, strategic programme of work. And here are some of the major milestones we want to see happen on the way:

- ✓ Every employer in the UK has access to a rich, practical range of resources so they can support people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus to thrive in the workplace
- ✓ We have major partnerships with some of the biggest employers in the UK, where senior leaders are leading the charge to create inclusive workplaces and ensure their products and services are accessible for our communities
- ✓ We have a well-evidenced business case for improving inclusion in the workplace for deaf people and people with hearing loss
- ✓ We have relationships with senior leaders with lived experience in every sector, who are committed to publicly championing inclusive practices and sharing their own experiences

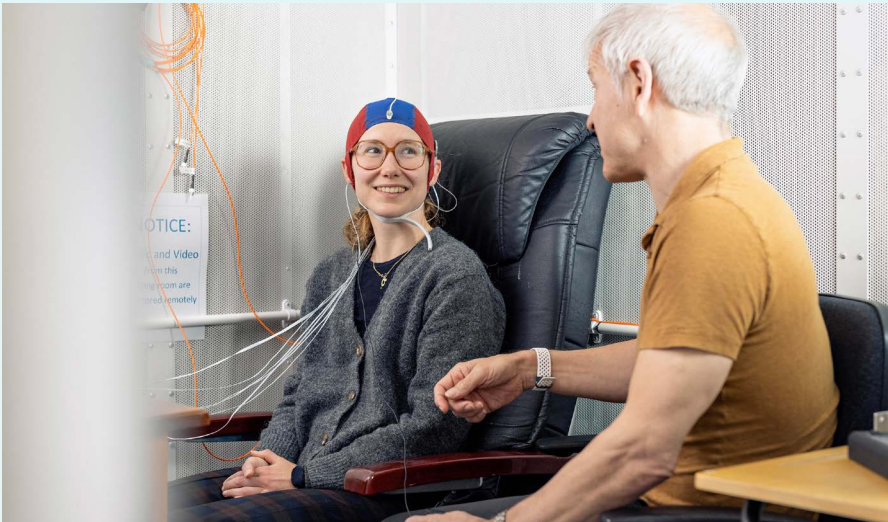
STRATEGIC PROGRAMME FOUR: BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

For millions of people, hearing loss and tinnitus are permanent – and there is often no way to prevent it happening. Research into treatments for hearing loss and tinnitus are chronically underfunded in the UK today – just 70p a year is spent on ear research per person affected: a fraction of the amount spent on other conditions. Research that could benefit millions in the future is getting stuck in the pipeline, with a lack of funding available to move great ideas into clinical trials.

RNID is the only UK charity dedicated to funding research to prevent the onset of hearing loss, enable people to regain their hearing and silence tinnitus,

We want to help more medical researchers discover and develop new treatments for hearing loss and tinnitus so we can see a step change in what's possible.

And we want to connect our communities with that research, meaningfully involving people with lived experience in new research areas and helping them to demand better treatments.



Our research theory of change in a nutshell:

Our goal is to create the environment needed to bring about a wide range of treatments to prevent hearing loss, improve hearing for those that want it, and silence tinnitus.



To do that we build networks across the research space, convening and influencing organisations and individuals. We connect researchers with people who have hearing loss or tinnitus. And we directly fund the development of new treatments, investing in the future of hearing health. We do this so that:

- There are more researchers working on the discovery and development of treatments
- There is a strong pipeline of research moving treatments into, and through, clinical trials
- The research taking place meets the needs of our communities

This is a long-term, strategic programme of work. And here are some of the major milestones we want to see happen on the way:

- ✓ There are new treatments for hearing loss and tinnitus in clinical trials
- ✓ New biological mechanisms have been discovered that can be targeted to halt or slow the onset of age-related hearing loss.
- ✓ Scientific breakthroughs have been made leading to a step change in the quality of hearing people experience when using hearing aids or cochlear implants
- ✓ Multiple gene and cell therapies have been shown to restore hearing, bringing life-changing treatments to a wider range of people
- ✓ Therapeutics have been developed capable of reducing the perception of tinnitus
- ✓ The benefits of new treatments are being measured consistently, and in ways that are meaningful to health regulators and people with hearing loss, so that new treatments are approved quickly and made available to those who need them.

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION DIRECT TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Our four strategic programmes drive all our work and decision making, and we are clear that as a national, digital-first organisation we want our work to change the lives of millions of people in the UK.

But this work has always been underpinned by our close connection to our communities of people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. Inseparable from our programme work is our direct delivery of world-class support and information to our communities. We make RNID available and accessible to everyone, by using a range of different channels to reach individuals and change lives one by one.



RNID Near You:

our in-person, community based service, run by incredible volunteers. We offer a walk-in service to support people with using and maintaining hearing aids, advice on accessible technology, help with our free online hearing check and – much more than that – a friendly local face to listen, understand and support.



Contact RNID:

working over a range of channels to meet the needs and preferences of all our communities, our dedicated team are on hand to provide information and support to anyone who is deaf, has hearing loss or tinnitus. You can get in touch via email, phone, live chat, BSL SignLive, text message or Relay UK to get expert advice and the information you need.

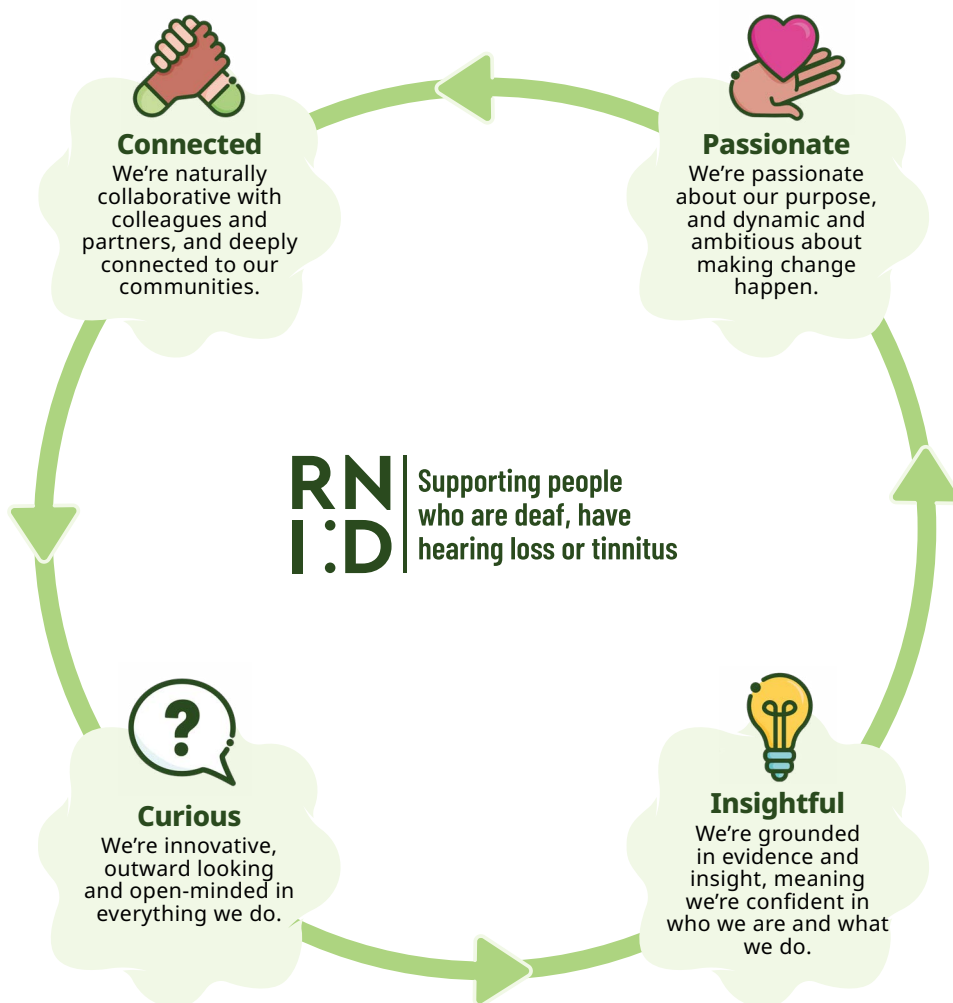


RNID online:

our website is the go-to source of information for anything to do with deafness or tinnitus in the UK today, and includes an easy-to-use 'Get support online' tool to help you get straight to the information you need.



OUR VALUES: AT THE HEART OF HOW WE WORK



HOW WE WORK

Our people are – without a doubt – our biggest asset.

For a charity well over a hundred years old, how we work has a distinctly modern flavour.

We are entirely home-based, by choice, meaning that we can employ people from right across the UK. We have a staff team collaborating from locations as varied as the Highlands of Scotland through to Cornwall and Belfast and everywhere in between: bringing together diverse perspectives and broad talent to all our work, guarding against group-think and adding richness.

We come together three times a year for our Staff Summits – vibrant events that blend external speakers with deep dives into areas of our work, a chance to share information and inspiration together.



We hope this insight into our strategy, and how we work, has made you want to find out more about RNID.

For more information about all our current work, go to **rnid.org.uk**

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RNID is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People. A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926).