

RNID in Communities: Providing information

Guidance for Community Volunteers September 2024



RNID in Communities – providing information

- As a Community Volunteer you will give talks to local groups and facilitate groups to take the RNID online hearing check.
- As part of these activities, you are likely to be asked questions about RNID and questions relating to deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus.
- You won't be expected to know all the answers to queries which arise, but you will build your knowledge during your volunteering activities and there are resources and other services to support you.
- It is fine to say you don't know or you're not sure of an answer and always best not to try and answer something you are not sure about.



Information resources and support

- There is a vast amount of useful information on RNID's website which you can access to develop your knowledge, and you can signpost people to the website www.rnid.org.uk
- You can also signpost people to Contact RNID for any queries or requests for further information. **See slide 9 for contact details.**
- Your Development Manager will liaise with you to give you any specific information for the area your activity is in e.g., NHS audiology departments in the area.
- You will have a leaflet to give out to people which will include the website address and the details for Contact RNID.

Information and support



Deaf awareness

Tips for communication, accessibility and being deaf aware at work.



Hearing loss

The different types of hearing loss, how to get your hearing tested and what can help you hear better.



Tinnitus

Information about tinnitus, what to do if you have it and the therapies available.

Understanding the information needed – a few tips

- The first step is to understand what is being asked.
- It can be useful to check back that you understand what the person is asking e.g., “am I right in thinking you want information on...”
- Sometimes, the person asking may not know exactly what they want because they can’t find the right words, or the situation is complicated.
- If you are not clear about what is being asked, it can be useful to ask **why** they want the information. So, for example, the reason they have approached you is that they have noticed that their husband can’t hear the doorbell anymore, this will give you more context and detail about what brought the person to you.



Understanding the information needed

- Ask open questions to help clarify such as “please tell me what sort of thing you would like to know about hearing aids”
- Try not to use closed questions which may give a one-word answer rather than more information, for example, “You’re having problems with your hearing aid aren’t you?”
- Remember that the person asking may have hearing loss so follow best practice in communication such as keeping eye contact and facing the person directly.
- There is more information on communication tips on RNID website



How to communicate with someone who is deaf or has hearing loss - RNID

Information, not advice or personal opinions

Whenever we provide information, it is important that we provide impartial information to help people to make informed decisions about what action they could take. You may have your own personal opinions on certain topics, but you must only give information that is factual.

You shouldn't:

- tell people what actions they think they should take, or what you would do in the same situation
- express your personal opinions or beliefs, for example about whether NHS hearing aids or private hearing aids are better, or what you think about other organisations, services, or professionals

When you are talking to people who are describing often complex situations, they may be very keen for you to give an opinion, but you can explain that your role is to give information rather than advise people on a course of action.

Information, not advice or personal opinions

You may also need to explain to people when information can only be given by appropriate qualified clinicians. For example:

- Can you tell me the best hearing aid for me?
- Will my hearing loss deteriorate?

It is fine to say that only the relevant professional people such as audiologists can answer such questions and signpost them to their audiology provider or GP as needed.



Additional tips

- If you have a lot of questions at the end of your talk and run out of time – that's no problem - you can signpost people towards Contact RNID or our website
- If your activity takes place during office hours and you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, you can get in touch with Contact RNID and they may be able to answer the question straight away for you!
- Let your Development Manager know if there were subjects you were asked about but feel you need to know more about, and your Development Manager will signpost you to relevant information.
- If someone asks you a question in a group setting which you think is best discussed 1 to 1, e.g., because it is complicated or sensitive - suggest you talk to them at the end of the session or signpost to Contact RNID.
- Always bear in mind that we can only give information, not advice, and it is fine to say you can't answer something or you are not the appropriate person to answer.



Contact RNID

Contact RNID provides free confidential and impartial information and support. They are open 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

- **Chat to us on the RNID website:** www.rnid.org.uk
- **Call:** 0808 808 0123
- **Email:** contact@rnid.org.uk
- **Book a BSL video call via our partners at SignLive:** create an account at the SignLive website or download the SignLive app for Android or the SignLive app for IOS
- **SMS/text:** 07360 268988
- **Relay UK:** 18001 then 0808 808 0123
- **Write:** RNID, 126 Fairlie Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 4PY



By delivering talks and giving information, you are playing an invaluable role in raising awareness of deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus and the services and support available.

You are making a hugely positive difference to communities.

Thank you!

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

