

Carrying out hearing checks

Overview and links to training resources
for community volunteers

October 2024

RNID Hearing Check – a quick summary

- The online hearing check takes about 3 minutes to complete.
- It is free of charge
- Over 454,000 people have already taken the test
- The test is for people aged 18 or over who have not been diagnosed with hearing loss
- The test measures how well people can hear speech when there is background noise and gives an indication of whether they need to see someone about their hearing

Take our free hearing check

See how well you're hearing in just 3 minutes with the RNID hearing check.

[Take the check](#)



Training resources

This presentation has links to the following resources to support training on hearing checks:

- [Video on background and technical information on hearing check](#)
- [Guidance Script](#) for carrying out an in-person hearing check
- [Walkthrough video](#) of carrying out the hearing check

Background and technical information

Franki Oliver, Audiology Manager at RNID has produced a 12-minute video covering:

- Why we have the RNID Hearing Check
- Brief technical explanation of the test
- How the test works
- What the check tells us
- How we talk about the results and next steps with service users
- [Hearing Check Training – Background and Technical Information - YouTube](#)

Background and technical information

What does the check tell us?

- Results are either:
 - The results suggest your hearing is normal
 - The results suggest you're showing signs of hearing loss
- Appropriate next steps are detailed on the results paper.

We provide a 3P letter explaining results for those showing signs of hearing loss.

There will be copies of this at the drop in centre.

RN I:D Supporting people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus

Setting up the checks

You will need to:

- Before you attend the group to deliver hearing checks, your Development Manager will have checked that a laptop or tablet is available and that someone can set that up on the day. RNID will provide you with headphones, antibacterial wipes, hygiene covers for the headphones and hearing check result letters.
- The online hearing check is accessed through RNID website – so you just need an internet connection on the laptop or tablet.
- Here is the link to the check on the RNID website [Hearing test - 3 minutes, free, online, easy and reliable | RNID](#)
- Switch the headphones on and connect the headphones to the laptop either through the cable provided or via Bluetooth connection.
- The guidance script includes details of setting the volume for the person taking the test and the volume shouldn't be changed during the test.
- Use an antibacterial wipe to sanitise the headphones and use a new pair of disposable headphone covers for each person who uses the headphones
- Check you have some hearing check result letters.

Carrying out the check

There is a step-by-step script for taking the hearing check which is available as a printed document. The online check itself takes about three minutes but it will take about 10 minutes to go through the check in person with the information you need to give before and after carrying out the check.

[Here](#) is the link to the script.

The next slide has a link to a video walkthrough of carrying out the check. In this video, the person who is doing the check inputs their responses on the tablet themselves. If someone is unable to input their own responses, you can ask them to tell you which numbers you hear, and you can input the numbers on the laptop or tablet for them.

Hearing check walkthrough

If you have tinnitus, please be aware that the video includes a demonstration of the hearing check during which you'll hear constant white noise. If you will find this uncomfortable, please mute the test from 4 min 18 second into the video through to 8 minutes.



Frequently asked questions

If people ask about wax/wax removal services

We can explain that it is normal and healthy to have a bit of wax in their ears but if it is causing symptoms such as hearing loss, tinnitus, or problems with hearing aids they may need to have removed.

We should never advise people to remove wax themselves and if they ask about specific devices to remove wax such as hopi ear candles or cotton buds we should strongly advise against as there is no evidence they work and they can be dangerous.

We know there are problems with access to NHS wax removal services at the moment, and this can vary in different parts of the country. We should direct people to our webpages if they have been having issues getting wax removed. [**Our ear wax removal campaign – RNID**](#)

We cannot give information about where to have wax removed privately. We can also signpost to [**Contact RNID**](#) if they have specific questions.

Frequently asked questions

If people ask about the cause of result saying they “have” or “may have” hearing loss

We can explain that there are lots of different causes of hearing loss, and this can only be confirmed by a medical professional. We can say hearing loss becomes more common as people get older, 40% of over 50s and 70% of over 70s having some form of hearing loss.

If people have specific questions about the validity of the hearing check

The check measures how well someone can hear speech in background noise, as this can usually indicate if someone has hearing loss. It has been measured to be reliable by the University of Southampton, however no test is 100% reliable and only a pure tone audiogram and assessment with an audiologist can diagnose hearing loss.

Frequently asked questions

Common questions about hearing aids

If people ask about the effectiveness of hearing aids and if they will work for them

We can explain that all modern hearing aids are digital, and prescription fitted, meaning they can be adjusted to suit individual needs. Evidence shows they are highly effective for people with hearing loss in helping them hear better. We can't say if hearing aids will be the appropriate option for them, as only that can be advised by an audiologist.

It is also important to emphasise that people get ongoing support after having hearing aids to help people get the most out of them.

Further information is available on RNID website [here](#)

Frequently asked questions

If people ask about the difference between NHS and private hearing aids

We can explain that both NHS and private hearing aids are digital and of good quality. The same manufacturers that supply the private market also supply the NHS.

Private hearing aids offer more choice of style and features, but these have to be paid for and there may also be ongoing costs. Waiting times are also likely to be shorter privately.

Many features such as Bluetooth connectivity with mobile phones are now available on NHS hearing aids.

We cannot say if one is better than the other or influence someone what to do based on personal experience.

More info on hearing aids on RNID website [here](#)

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).

