

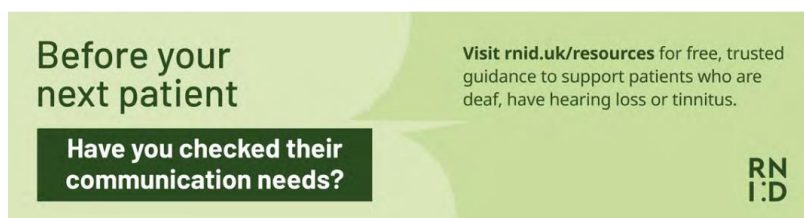
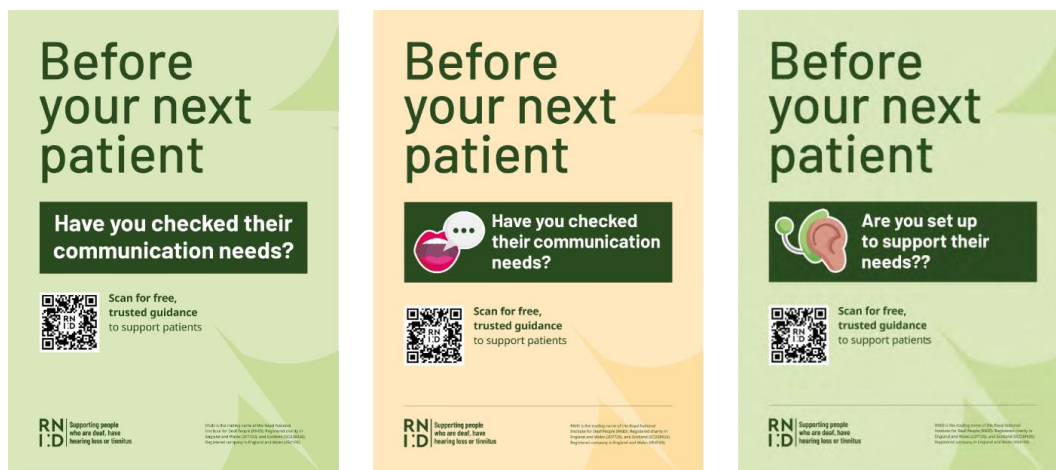
RNID Healthcare professional resources

Microsoft survey

[RNID resources for healthcare professionals – Fill in form](#)

Digital and physical assets

Concept 1



Concept 2

Access is part of care.

When care is accessible, patients can understand, participate and feel confident in decisions.

 Scan to watch a patient story
Practical guidance for Deaf and hearing loss access

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

RNID is the trading name of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID).
Registered charity in England and Wales (277556) and Scotland (SC038565).
Registered company in England and Wales (2041165).

Access isn't an extra.

Meeting access needs is a patient right – and supports safe, dignified clinical care.

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Access is part of care

When care is accessible, patients can understand, participate and feel confident in decisions.

Visit rnid.uk/resources to watch a patient story and for trusted, practical guidance – built with Deaf patients.

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



Concept 3

When communication needs aren't met...

**"I leave unsure
and avoid future
appointments
as they are
unhelpful."**

- Male patient, Sign language user



Watch the patient story.
Access practical guidance for
supporting communication needs.

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

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When access needs are supported...

**"My doctor
adapted to my
needs, and I left
confident about
my health."**

- Patient with hearing loss



Watch the patient story.
Access practical
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When communication needs aren't met...

**"I mishear key
information
and worry my
condition will
worsen."**

- Patient needing communication support



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When communication needs aren't met...

"I leave unsure and avoid future appointments as they are unhelpful."

- Male patient, Sign language user

Visit rnid.uk/resources to watch the patient story.
Access practical guidance for supporting communication needs

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

Patient experience video

[Caitlin's story: why accessible communication matters | Videos & Movies on Vimeo](#)



Website resources

1. Landing page

Link: [Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss - RNID](#)

(password: RN1D)

Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss

Contents

- Overview
- [Ask about communication needs](#)
- [Offer alternative contact methods](#)
- [Provide communication support](#)
- [Communicate clearly](#)

As a healthcare professional, there are simple steps you can take to communicate with people who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Accessible communication means that patients can give informed consent and understand what's happening at every stage - from booking an appointment to making decisions about treatment.

This guide can be used by clinicians, practice managers, administrative staff, and anyone else who interacts with patients in your service.

Why accessible communication matters

RNID storyteller Caitlin shares her experiences of accessing healthcare as a deaf patient, and describes the impact that inaccessible communication can have.



Do

- **ask** about communication needs
- **book** communication support in advance
- **check** that the patient understands



Don't

- wait for patients to tell you their needs
- rely on family or friends to interpret
- rush patients who have communication needs

→ [Next](#)

[Ask about communication needs](#)

2. 'Ask about communication needs' page

Link: [Ask about communication needs - RNID](#) (password: rn1d)

Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss

Contents

- [Overview](#)
- **Ask about communication needs**
- [Offer alternative contact methods](#)
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Ask about communication needs

Everyone's needs are different, and they can change over time. Always ask rather than assuming what someone needs.

Check patient records

Before booking an appointment or seeing a patient, check their record for flags about their communication needs.

If there are no flags recorded, be proactive and ask the patient what they need.

Here's an example of what you could say:

“

Do you need an interpreter or another type of communication support?

Is there anything else I can do to make it easier for you to communicate?

Some patients may use a [physical or digital communication card](#) to tell you what they need. Get familiar with this format so you know what to look for.

Record and share communication needs

When a patient shares their needs, make sure to add this to their record.

This should be linked to a flag or alert that will prompt staff to take action when they book appointments in future.

Use the [Reasonable Adjustments Digital Flag](#) to record communication needs, or the equivalent system in your area.

Identifying, recording and sharing communication needs are part of your responsibilities under the [Accessible Information Standard \(AIS\)](#).

→ **Next**

[Offer alternative contact methods](#)

3. 'Offer alternative contact methods' page

Link: [Offer alternative contact methods - RNID](#) (password: rn1d)

Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss

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- [Overview](#)
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-

Offer alternative contact methods

People with hearing loss may find it difficult or impossible to communicate by telephone.

This can make it difficult to do things like book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and get test results.

Provide alternative ways to contact you, such as:

- email
- online booking
- SMS text messaging
- live webchat

Use telephone relay services

If you need to contact a patient by phone, there are services you can use to relay information accessibly:

- [Relay UK](#), a free service where a relay assistant will type what you're saying to the person with hearing loss
- a British Sign Language (BSL) video relay service, such as [Convo](#) or [SignVideo](#)

Check the patient's records to see what contact method they prefer.

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[Ask about communication needs](#)

→ [Next](#)

[Provide communication support](#)

4. 'Provide communication support' page

Link: [Provide communication support - RNID](#) (password: rn1d)

Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss

Contents

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 - [Ask about communication needs](#)
 - [Offer alternative contact methods](#)
 - **Provide communication support**
 - [Communicate clearly](#)
-

Provide communication support

Some patients may need professional communication support, such as a British Sign Language interpreter or a notetaker.

Book communication support in advance

It can be difficult to book communication professionals at short notice, so book them as far in advance as possible.

Check if your service has a process for booking communication support or a contract with a specific agency.

The communication professionals you work with must be registered with either:

- [the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People](#)
- [the Scottish Register of Language Professionals with the Deaf Community](#)

Read more guidance on [how to book communication support](#).

Confirm the booking with the patient

Send the patient information about communication support in advance of their appointment, so they have reassurance that their needs will be met.

Book a longer appointment for patients who need communication support, because it may take extra time to make sure all the information is interpreted.

Do not rely on family or friends to interpret

This limits the patient's autonomy and privacy, and there's a risk that the information will not be correctly translated.

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[Offer alternative contact methods](#)

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[Communicate clearly](#)

5. 'Communicate clearly' page

Link: [Communicate clearly - RNID](#) (password: rn1d)

Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss

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- [Provide communication support](#)
- **Communicate clearly**

Communicate clearly

When speaking to your patient who is deaf or has hearing loss:

- **get their attention** before speaking
- **face them** and make sure they can see your lips and expressions
- **speak clearly**, but do not shout
- **use plain language** and be straight to the point
- **speak directly to the patient**, not their interpreter or someone they have with them

Check understanding

Ask the patient to repeat information back to make sure they understand it.

Be patient, and rephrase what you've said if needed.

Write information down if the patient asks you to.

Consider background noise and lighting

Make sure the lighting is good enough for patients to see your lip patterns and facial expressions.

Reduce background noise as much as possible, or move to a quieter area when speaking to patients with hearing loss.

Use assistive technologies

Install technologies such as:

- a [hearing loop system](#) for patients who use hearing aids
- visual display systems or vibrating pagers that let patients know when it's their turn to be seen

Be aware that patients may want to use their own devices to communicate, such as [speech-to-text apps](#) on their phone or tablet.



Printable communication tips

You can download these tips and print them as a poster or leaflet to serve as a visual reminder.

[Download the PDF](#)

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[Communicating with patients who are deaf or have hearing loss](#)