

HEARING CARE REIMAGINED

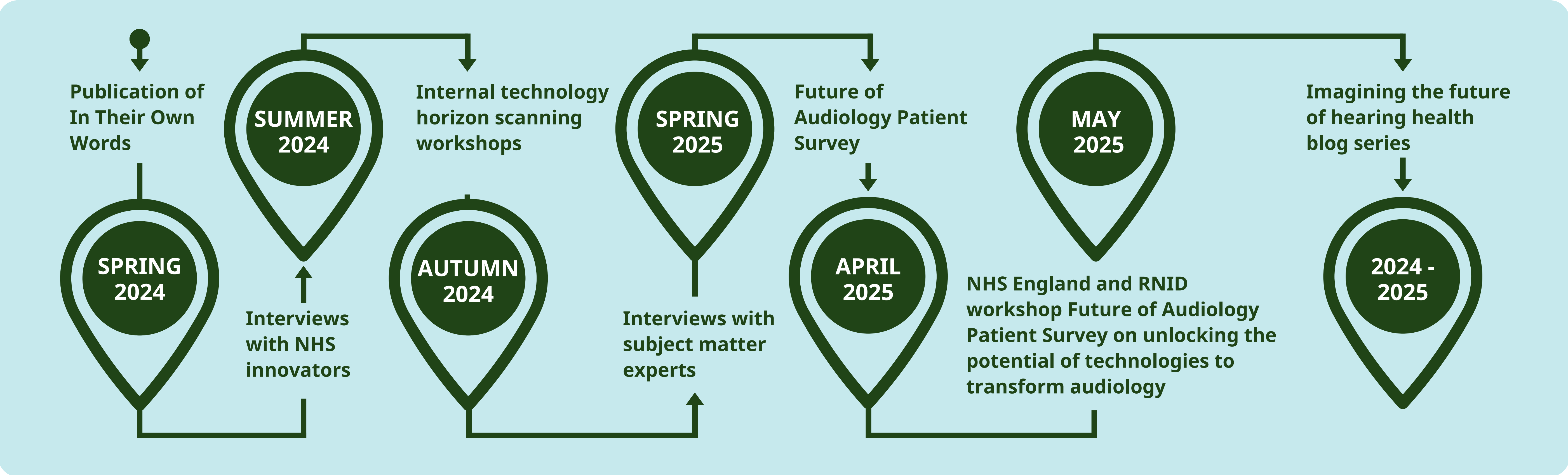
How technology can transform hearing healthcare

BACKGROUND

Following the publication of In Their Own Words (2024), RNID has been exploring how technology could transform audiology services. Innovations in technology have the potential to ease pressure on audiologists and enhance person-centred care. We wanted to understand where technology can have the greatest impact for people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus, and the priorities of decision makers and hearing health professionals around the use of technology in audiology.

METHODS

We used a mixed methods approach including surveys, interviews, workshops, and focus groups to gather insights from healthcare professionals, academics, technologists, and people with lived experience. We explored priorities and ideas for improving hearing healthcare.



WE IDENTIFIED 4 KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION:

Identify early signs of hearing loss

Support quicker diagnosis of hearing loss

Make it easier for people to get support

Empower people to manage their hearing health

We explored how existing and emerging technologies could transform hearing healthcare. Examples include:

- Automation and AI** intriaging that have been proven effective could support quicker diagnosis, whilst reducing administrative burden.
- Existing **digital hearing checks** could encourage people to regularly think about their hearing health. These checks are free, quick, and easy to do at home.
- Medical-grade **remote hearing tests** are emerging that could allow people to get an accurate diagnosis at home.
- Adopting **video otoscopes** and image sharing could improve diagnosis by creating population health data.

“More choice, opportunities to test yourself, input your own findings and access your own records. Being informed about next steps is important too. It all means we are less likely to fall between the cracks”

Person with hearing loss and tinnitus

We grouped technologies by readiness:

Scale	Adapt	Test
NHS apps and platforms could help patients understand their test results and devices, access online advice, and arrange support, including remote consultations.	Remotely adjustable hearing aids could support treatment at home and increase access to audiology, while reducing missed in-person appointments.	In-ear biometric monitoring in hearing aids could support other health needs by recording heart rate, step count, cognitive health and fall detection.

