

# THE IMPACT OF RNID COMMUNITY AFTERCARE ‘RNID NEAR YOU’

Independent evaluation by Apteligen for RNID,  
September 2026

## Who is RNID

RNID is the national charity supporting more than 18 million people in the UK who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus.

## What is RNID Near You?

RNID provides practical face-to-face support at ‘RNID Near You’ drop-in sessions across the UK. We help people manage their hearing loss close to home, in community settings, without the need to make an audiology appointment.

Hearing support is ongoing and requires maintenance, reassurance, troubleshooting and adjustment over time. RNID Near You sessions offer:

- basic hearing aid repairs, maintenance and support to get the most of NHS hearing aids.
- an initial hearing check and information on the local hearing loss pathway.
- information about deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus.
- support from volunteers, many of whom are deaf or have hearing loss or tinnitus themselves.
- help connecting hearing aids to mobile phones and using the relevant apps.
- signposting to further support, including RNID’s online resources.

While practical hearing aid support remains central, the evaluation suggests much of the value generated by RNID Near You also comes from reassurance, confidence-building, information, social connection and helping people navigate wider support.

## Value for audiology and NHS services

RNID Near You provides routine community aftercare that eases pressure on NHS audiology, and improves access. It complements, rather than replaces, audiology by handling non-specialist support, keeping hearing aids working between appointments, and helping people avoid delays, unnecessary hospital visits, or disengagement from hearing support.

In the evaluation, audiologists described this as allowing their appointments to focus on work that requires clinical expertise.

The impact of this service works best within local hearing pathways with support from audiology. This helps deliver faster mobilisation, effective training, reliable consumables and clearer referral routes.

## Cost benefit and wider value

RNID Near You delivers positive financial impact and wider value. By putting a monetary value on activities that reduce or meet demand for NHS services, release capacity within the NHS and help lower costs for individuals, the cost benefit model demonstrates that our service creates a measurable economic benefit while improving access to practical support for people with hearing loss.

## Conclusion

RNID Near You meets an unmet need and complements clinical audiology.

Resolving routine maintenance and troubleshooting quickly, improving access to support and helping people continue using their hearing aids helps the NHS manage demand and free capacity for more complex care.

## One RNID Near You volunteer shares we are more than a repair service

“We get to know people. We know their names, and it definitely is for them wider than just ‘I must go and get my batteries’ or ‘I must go and get my hearing aid fixed’... The fact that we’re there every month matters.”

### - RNID Near You volunteer

In many cases, regular support is what makes continued hearing aid use possible. At RNID Near You we help people understand their hearing aids while adjusting to them and recognising when specialist help is required.

## Supporting people close to their homes

For some people, attending a familiar community venue is simply easier than going to hospital, particularly for those with mobility difficulties, limited transport or anxiety about clinical settings. A local drop-in also makes it easier to ask a small question before it becomes a larger problem.

“I have a struggle to get to the hospital, and we seem to miss appointments if my wife does not feel well enough on the day. We have to wait again; this way, we can be flexible. What a great idea, thank you RNID and thank you NHS for putting us first.”

### - Service user feedback

For more information on where we are and how we can help visit [rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/rnid-near-you/](https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/rnid-near-you/)