

# LOUD & CLEAR

## OUR CHARITY MANIFESTO



**We are RNID:** the national charity supporting people in the UK who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. A General Election is an important moment to raise awareness across all parties and with prospective MPs about the issues which affect our communities and how parliament can make a difference. That's why we produced our 'charity manifesto' that sets out our most important asks.

**People who are deaf or have hearing loss can face barriers in every part of their lives, be it accessing healthcare services, employment, or shops on the high street:**

- In recent years, vital **audiology services** have faced many challenges including staff shortages, underfunding, and the Covid-19 pandemic disruption. Worryingly, these services have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels of activity and more people than ever are waiting for an audiology appointment.
  - **Healthcare** remains inaccessible for many deaf people and people with hearing loss, with 67% of people reporting no accessible method of contacting their GP has been made available to them and 81% of patients with communication needs reporting having an appointment where their needs were unmet.
  - People who are deaf and have hearing loss face barriers entering, remaining, and progressing in the **workplace**.
- Our community is less likely to be in employment than the non-disabled population and employers lack support and knowledge to support deaf employees in workplace.
- There is a serious lack of evidence capturing the life outcomes, such as employment or housing status, of BSL users in the UK and many deaf BSL users are excluded from moments of national importance due Government communications only be available in written English or live speeches lacking BSL interpretation.
  - Our It Does Matter Report found that two thirds (67%) of our communities **experienced negative attitudes or behaviours** in the last year, and this figure rises to 82% among deaf people and 90% among BSL users.

This is why RNID is changing society to make it more inclusive for everyone and calling on the next Parliament to take the opportunity to address these barriers by implementing policies in four key areas to ensure meaningful improvements for deaf people and people with hearing loss.

# WE WANT TO SEE THE NEXT GOVERNMENT:

## Guarantee equal opportunities in the workplace



- Set an ambitious dual target to close the disability employment gap.
- Help employers meet their obligations and replicate best practice through the creation of a Disability Information Hub and reform of the Disability Confident Scheme.
- Reform Access to Work to offer effective support for deaf and disabled people.

## Work with the BSL community to transform their life chances.



- Ensure that official Government surveys reflect the fact that deaf BSL users face greater barriers to accessing services and participating in society due to the language barrier they face and measure them as a separate group to those with hearing loss.
- Government communications should be accessible for BSL users and RNID's accessible communications checklist which outlines what actions departments need to take to ensure they meet the needs of people who have hearing loss and are deaf, should be embedded as best practice across Government.
- As the Head of Government, the Prime Minister must ensure No.10 press conferences have a BSL interpreter in-view to ensure that deaf BSL users have access to moments of national importance.
- Retain the BSL Advisory Board but evolve it to a model of genuine co-production on policies that impact the lives of the Deaf community.

## Deliver access to quality NHS Audiology Services for everyone across England



- Recognise the importance of hearing loss as a wider factor in health outcomes and introduce a national screening check to enable identification and intervention.
- Ensure patients have access to NHS wax removal services, provided in primary or community care and in line with NICE Guidance, which are evidence-based recommendations for health and care in England and Wales.
- Transform the audiology pathway to ensure a high-quality service, tackling the short term problems around waiting lists and creating a service fit for the future.
- Increase the funding in biomedical research for hearing loss and tinnitus, redressing a long-term under-investment in the field.

## Ensure the NHS meets everyone's communication needs



- Realise the full potential of the Accessible Information Standard (AIS), including effective monitoring and enforcement of its implementation.
- Mandatory training on deaf awareness and the AIS for all NHS staff.

If you would like to find out more about RNID's manifesto calls you can read the full manifesto [here](#). You can help us raise awareness of these asks by discussing them with your local parliamentary candidates.

**See our tips here on how to do this.**

You can also find out more information about voting in the 2024 General Election on our [website](#).

**RNID** | Supporting people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus