

# Early diagnosis of hearing loss and its impact on dementia.

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# Prevalence and Impact

- 12 million in the UK – that's 1 in 5
- Ageing population- set to rise to 14.5 million by 2035
- HL ranked third for disease burden in England
  - Isolation,
  - Poor mental health including depression
  - Falls
  - Dementia

# Dementia

- The 2020 Lancet Commission on dementia prevention identified **hearing loss as the largest potentially modifiable risk factor for dementia.**
- Hearing loss in mid-life **accounts for up to 8.2% of all dementia cases.**
- Previous research shows that having hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia by up to five times, but evidence suggests **hearing aids may reduce the risk of cognitive decline.**
- **NICE recommends hearing aids** as the most cost-effective intervention for hearing loss.

# Health inequalities

- Hearing loss does not affect everyone equally
- In the UK, around 40% of people over 50 and 71% of people over 70 have hearing loss
- Ethnic minority groups suffer more with the effects of hearing loss, as uptake of screening and hearing aids is lower in these groups
- Those who work in noisy environments are at higher risk of hearing loss, demonstrating a possible causal link to socioeconomic inequalities
- Regional disparity in the prevalence of hearing loss

# Access and uptake

- Millions who could benefit from hearing aids don't have them
- Takes an average of 10 years to get help
  - People delay taking action
  - Systemic barriers or delays



# The Solution- NHS hearing checks

- RNID have been calling on the national screening committee (NSC) to implement a national hearing screening programme
- Responded every 3 years from 2009-2021
- NSC have made many arguments not to including:
  - Lack of an RCT
  - People not using hearing aids



**UK**  
National  
Screening  
Committee

**2021**

Annual  
call for  
suggestions

Do you have a suggestion for a new NHS screening programme?

This is **your** chance to suggest a new topic for consideration by the UK National Screening Committee.

The annual call runs from  
**6 September to 6 December 2021**

Find out more at  
[www.gov.uk/uknsc](http://www.gov.uk/uknsc)



**Stroke**

**Just 20 minutes**  
of your time  
to keep you  
**running like clockwork**

**Heart disease**

**Diabetes**

**Kidney disease**

**FREE NHS Health Check**  
for 40-74 year olds  
Helping you prevent heart disease,  
stroke, diabetes and kidney disease

## Current call RNID-

- Integrating a hearing check within the NHS Health Check
- The flagship initiative for identifying people at risk of developing cardiovascular conditions which lead to premature mortality and morbidity
- Section on dementia risk reduction- strengthened by the addition of a simple hearing check

# ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH UK

FOR A CURE



**Clean up our air** by committing to reducing levels of fine particulate matter pollution across the UK to  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  by 2030, reaching  $5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  soon after.



**Make smoking obsolete** by fully implementing the 2022 Khan review's recommendations on tobacco control policy.



**Promote healthy eating** by fully implementing the 2021 National Food Strategy's proposals, including reducing salt, sugar, and calorie content in processed foods.



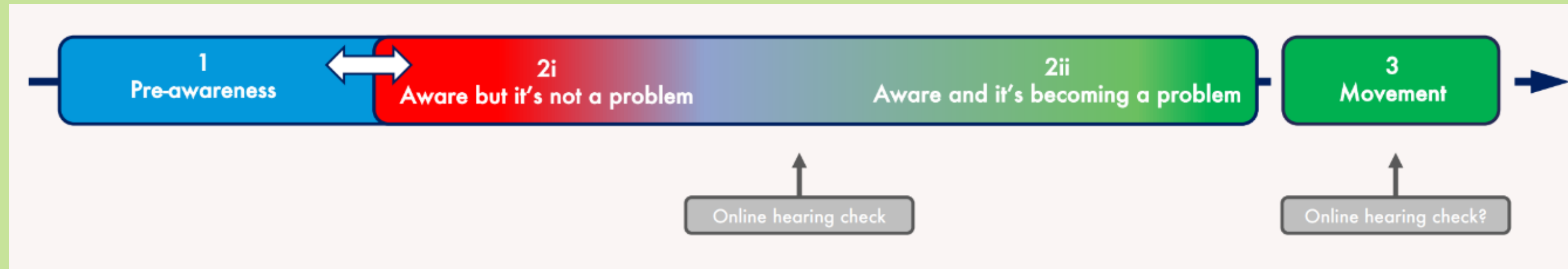
**Tackle high blood pressure** by implementing NICE-approved treatments that manage high blood pressure, saving over £1bn annually in dementia-related treatment and care in England alone.



**Identify and treat hearing loss** by removing barriers to a hearing test, including integrating a hearing check into the NHS Health Check.



# RNID hearing check research



- Desk Research
- Qualitative Research
- Intervention design -using behaviour change techniques (EAST)
- Test, learn, iterate



# RNID hearing check

Completed checks: Overall 330,000  
250,000 in last year

86% complete the hearing check

At 12 weeks: 87% of people with potential hearing loss have taken some action on their hearing health

Highly commended at the third sector awards, communication campaign category

## Online hearing test

Check your hearing in **just 3 minutes** with our free online hearing test.

320,904 people have taken the test so far.

[Check your hearing](#)



# RNID Hearing Check- Reach

PR coverage  
-New Year  
-World Hearing Day

Links on all 4 UK NHS websites

57 partners with QR codes



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

**NHS**

Phase 1

# Creatives (Phase 1 -

Phase 3

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Did you know that you can check your own hearing, at home? All you need is your phone (or laptop!) and some headphones. It's quick, free and easy to do!

- Visit our website
- Grab some headphones
- Take the check
- Get instant results

Check your hearing with RNID's free online test!

It's as quick as making a cuppa

mid.org.uk  
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It's easy to check your hearing. If you've been thinking about it, why not take the online hearing check from national charity RNID and get a result to your inbox in 3 minutes?

All you need is a laptop or phone, a quiet spot to sit in and our website will do the rest.

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Phase 2

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"I did RNID's free hearing check on my phone in my kitchen - it was really easy to do and gave me a result in 3 minutes!"

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"I did RNID's free hearing check on my phone in my kitchen - it was really easy to do and gave me a result in 3 minutes!"

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Is the volume creeping up on your TV?

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"My family had to keep telling me to turn the TV volume down. It was starting to become 'a thing'..."

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"It's just fantastic to be able to hear properly again. I used to miss a lot on radio and TV and also sometimes got the feeling that people thought I was stupid because I couldn't hear what they were saying"

"I'm less stressed. I'm sleeping better, I'm enjoying work more, I'm more keen to socialise. I generally feel like I have more energy and want to be around people more"

# Continuous improvement

- **Increasing hearing check completion rates** from 46% to 85%
- **Increasing the percentage of people signing up for email journeys to provide timely information** from 22% to 40%
- **Introducing an SMS reminder service** for those that are too busy or are in a noisy place. Early insights indicate that of those that are using the SMS reminder, 27% are going on to check their hearing.



# Christmas/ Families

## Christmas campaign

- Top tips for grown-up children to discuss the check with their parents
- Focus on low stakes approach
- Strength of bringing expertise together – Marcoms, Behaviour change and Psychotherapy skills





# Health inequalities

Demographic information indicates that **some communities at risk of health inequalities may not be accessing the check**. For example, people from ethnic minority communities

RNID could:

- Create more inclusive coms
- Pilot a community outreach approach e.g. places of worship
- Optimise touchpoints
- Encourage further research in this area



# Next steps

Christmas Campaign to grown up children

Ethnic minority groups –pilot in places of worship

Considering further reach including areas of greater deprivation

Considerations for the check in other languages

Corporate promotion

Linking to hearing prevention campaigns



**RN**  
**I:D** | Supporting people  
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hearing loss or tinnitus

