



sense
for deafblind people

It's in our hands

2009-2014 Our five year strategy

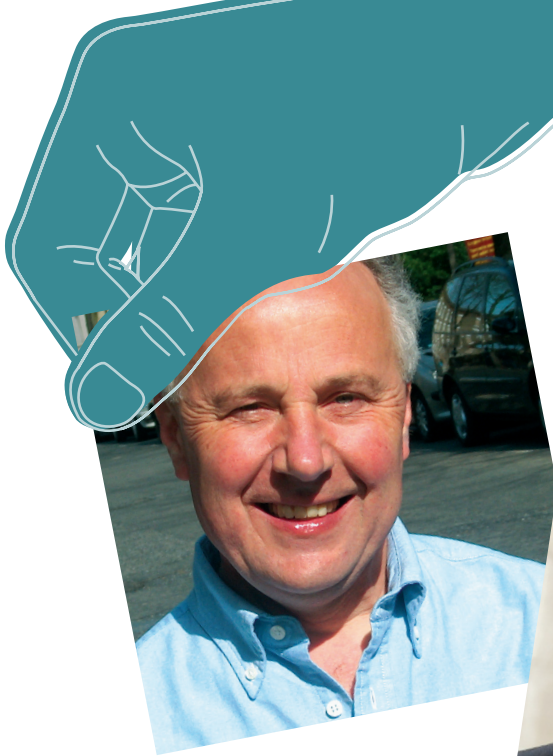


From our
Chairman
and our **CEO**

Our vision

**A world in which all deafblind
children and adults can be
full and active members
of society**





The document in your hands is Sense's new strategy. It sets out what we are aiming to achieve over the next five years and is the result of many months of consultation with deafblind people, their families and carers and Sense staff.

Sense has been tremendously successful at developing services, campaigning for change and supporting families. These proud achievements, among many others, form the basis of our new ambitious plans.

As the number of deafblind people increases - and families and carers continue to struggle to get the support they deserve - we will aim to deliver more and have a greater impact on their lives. We have set ourselves some real challenges for the future and that's why it's important we all take an active role in delivering our new strategy and ensuring we make a big difference.

We will continue our commitment to support deafblind people locally by providing community based services and will be flexible and responsive to their changing needs. We will work tirelessly to remove barriers to participation and support deafblind people to campaign and take action to get what they are entitled to.

There will be a focus on some new areas of development including research and technology and a greater emphasis on improving the outcomes for deafblind people through more joined-up ways of working. There will undoubtedly be changes, but our commitment to Sense's vision of a world in which all deafblind children and adults can be full and active members of society will drive our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.C.', written over a horizontal line.

John Crabtree
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Brook', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Brook
Chief Executive



This document outlines what Sense hopes to achieve over the next five years and how we plan to go about meeting the goals we have set ourselves. Throughout this period we hope to make a big difference to the lives of deafblind people and achieve our vision.

We recognise that

the numbers of deafblind people are increasing – especially younger people with complex needs and people aged over 75;

deafblind people and families struggle to be able to be active and involved because of the many barriers they face;

people need information and support and want services that are designed to meet their specific, individual and unique needs;

there is a need to work with partner organisations nationally and internationally to ensure the recognition of deafblindness and the rights of those who experience it.



Our five year goals

More deafblind people and their families will be active valued citizens.

They will feel less isolated, enjoy increased well-being, self-confidence and self-esteem – learning, sharing and contributing to their communities. More will be done to remove the barriers that prevent active citizenship.

Deafblind people and their families will be better able to take control of their lives getting the information, support and services they want.

They will be able to better deal with the issues they face and be empowered to make their own decisions.

Deafblind people's choices and rights as citizens will increasingly be respected.

Communities, organisations, services and authorities will be more knowledgeable about what deafblind people want, will be more understanding of their individual needs and will make changes that lead to increased choice, opportunities and equal rights.

We will ensure that over the next five years

deafblind people are more valued by society, able to make choices and be active citizens;

barriers to participation are recognised, challenged and removed;

we innovate and develop new models of working that match people's individual needs and the environment we operate in;

we provide at least 5% more deafblind people with quality services each year;

Sense has the information, knowledge, skills and expertise to maintain its position as a world-leading deafblind organisation; and

we record our work to measure the impact we make against agreed key performance indicators.



Where should
we **focus** our
activities?

Our focus

We will focus on developing the following priority activities over the next five year period prioritising our choices by their impact, feasibility and our available resources. We will review our priorities annually ensuring we match them to opportunities, resources and immediate need.

An illustration of a teal hand holding a light green rectangular sign. The sign contains the text 'What are our priorities?' in a dark purple font. The hand is positioned on the right side of the sign, with the thumb and index finger gripping the top edge.

What are our priorities?

Priority activities

Campaigning – more deafblind people and families are supported to campaign, organise and take action

Policy work – identifying changes that will benefit all deafblind people and families

Participation – removing the barriers to participation so that more deafblind people and families are able to be active and have their voice heard throughout Sense and its activities

Advocacy (information, advice and support) – to improve outcomes for deafblind people

Services - providing more quality support and services for deafblind people including services that fit with the personalisation agenda and other changes to the social care market. This will include designing some services to fit future needs

Children – enabling families and young people at times of specific need and key points of transition

Helping an increasing number of older deafblind individuals, especially those with the most complex needs by developing specific locality models of working that can be replicated and utilised by statutory and other voluntary sector providers

Research and development – devise a co-ordinated research programme which enables Sense to undertake pioneering work relevant to deafblind people, to keep abreast of developments elsewhere and to meet our information needs

Technology for deafblind people – working to remove the barriers that prevent access to technology, including promoting development of new technology and improving access to technology

Profile – our contribution to collaborative working nationally, across Europe and internationally is recognised and delivered in partnership with Sense Scotland and Sense International

Funds - to begin to achieve these ambitious plans we will need to double our charitable income



To achieve our plans we intend to do the following in the first year:

decide what changes we need to make internally in order to achieve our goals – including how we deliver services and how we support their delivery;

decide how we can improve our support to deafblind people so they are able to participate and be active in society. This will involve reviewing the operation of our social care and related services in the light of changing policies;

agree a development and delivery plan for our work with families and children including education and social support through our holiday and family support events;

decide how research, policy work and inclusion activities should be integrated within Sense for the future so they are more effective and agree our initial priorities including:-

- developing a proposal for national research into the numbers of deafblind people and their changing situation and needs and seek external funding to contribute to this;

improve how we can organise and successfully deliver our advocacy, advice and outreach services on a comprehensive national basis and decide how to ensure people have access to legal support when required;

agree a five year action plan for our work on improving the rights of deafblind people. We will need to ensure deafblind people's voices are central to the work and be clear how campaigning, communications and policy work will contribute to this; and

agree key performance indicators at the beginning of this process so we can effectively measure our impact over the next five years.



What are
we **aiming**
to **achieve?**

By the end of the second year we would have expected to have

fully implemented any internal changes required from our five year strategy within Sense and have successfully operated them for 12 months;

fully implemented and begun to see the initial effect of investing to increase charitable income;

begun to implement all the plans developed in year one including:

- developing our national advocacy service
- beginning to implement agreed changes where identified to our social care provision taking forward our children's and families work;

developed and begun to use new reporting mechanisms that demonstrate in a transparent way what we are achieving to internal and external organisations;

reviewed the contributions and value we can bring to our existing and new partnerships, international activity and align the organisation accordingly; and

published the first interim review of our strategy and any necessary realignment by March 2011.



Our purpose and values

We work in partnership with deafblind people, their families, carers and professionals to remove the barriers faced by people who are challenged because of deafblindness or sensory impairment with other disabilities and to provide the information, support and services that make a big difference.

Our values guide all that we do:

The worth of individuals

We will embrace diversity and respond to individual need

Self-determination

We will promote the rights of individuals and will provide support for this where necessary

Personal fulfilment

We will promote opportunities for all individuals to develop and achieve their potential

Openness and honesty

Our interactions will be transparent, open to scrutiny and built on trust and accountability

Learning and improving

We will continuously improve the quality of what we do by consulting and reflecting on our actions

At Sense we

are a leading expert in deafblindness and are focused on making a sustainable difference to individual lives;

aim that every deafblind person's life is enriched by opportunities and choices;

are determined to create change so that deafblind people can lead as fulfilling a life as they wish;

provide individual services, information and representation for deafblind people, their families and carers; and

are supportive, positive and innovative, raise expectations as to what is possible and deliver what no-one else can.

Some clarification over how we intend to behave

Our charitably funded activities will exclusively focus on helping deafblind individuals of all ages.

We will identify the issues faced by deafblind people by asking them what affects them most. We will campaign on this agenda with deafblind people so as active citizens they are able to be mobile, access information, communicate with others and participate in the activities of their choice.

We will provide a high quality nationally available information support and advocacy service for deafblind people and families who are seeking to break down barriers or receive services that meet their needs.

We will continue to expect full cost recovery for any services that we provide under contract to statutory agencies.

We will continue to support people in our existing residential and other direct care services who have funding from statutory agencies.

We will provide ongoing opportunities for social support to deafblind people and their families.

Voluntary action will be promoted across the organisation with improved opportunities for involvement and mutual support and work to maximise the potential asset provided by volunteers.

There will be opportunities for deafblind people as employees and for volunteers across all of Sense's activities and best practice will be developed

We will ensure we remain on the cutting edge of work with and for deafblind people. To do this we will:-

- pilot new ways of supporting people that fit with the market we operate within;
- pilot ways of supporting people who have personal budgets; and
- advance our understanding of how to help and support children and families in the light of advancements in education, technology and information.

We will select and target key audiences to communicate with where this will have a significant impact on deafblind people including politicians, decision makers and the media.

We will invest in generating charitable income that is then spent on the priorities of deafblind people and their families.

Underpinning all our actions, over the next five years we expect to be demonstrating:

Passion in our approach to deafblindness
Excellent governance and risk management
Focused and effective management
Cost effective ways of working
Transparency and openness
Willingness to work in partnership and learn from others
The value of our world renowned expertise



What
are *your*
thoughts?

Tell us what you think
about our new plans and what
excites you about the goals
we've set ourselves for the
next five years. Join the
discussion at [www.sense.org.
uk/5yearplan](http://www.sense.org.uk/5yearplan) or email
itsinourhands@sense.org.uk

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

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www.sense.org.uk/5yearplan