

One-to-one support services

People with dual sensory impairment face unique challenges in communicating, getting around safely, and accessing information.

Sense offers a range of one-to-one support services designed to help the individual child or adult to access their environment, fulfil their potential and live as independently as possible. Specialist services support people with either acquired or congenital deafblindness, and are provided by professional trained staff.

Communicator-Guides

Communicator-Guides assist people with acquired dual sensory impairment to improve or maintain their independence within their own home or community – a human "enabler", who acts as the eyes and ears of the deafblind person.

The Communicator-Guide works on with the user one-to-one, helping them to use community services such as doctors' surgeries, shops and leisure facilities, by enabling them to communicate effectively with other people, access written and environmental information, and increasing mobility by escorting the user to different locations. This might include:

- visiting the deafblind person at home, to help with correspondence and bills
- acting as an escort when someone goes shopping, visits friends, or takes part in leisure activities
- accompanying the user on an appointment to facilitate communication.

A Communicator-Guide is trained in deafblind awareness, and in different deafblind communication methods, such as clear speech and the deafblind manual alphabet. Training also includes guiding of deafblind people, and first aid to a required standard.

Who are Communicator-Guides for?

Communicator-Guides work with people with acquired dual sensory impairment – that is, people who have developed significant sight and hearing difficulties during their life. Older people who have lost sight and hearing are most likely to be affected.

People with dual sensory impairment often feel isolated from their immediate environment and the outside world. Communicator-Guide services are designed to relieve this isolation by providing deafblind people with regular human contact with a trained communicator who understands their needs, and offers a means of access to community services.

Intervenors

An Intervenor works with a congenitally deafblind child or adult on a one-to-one basis, following an individually designed programme. The Intervenor acts as an enabler, promoting the person's development based on an assessment of their individual needs and skills.

The Intervenor ensures that the deafblind person can receive undistorted information, which enables them to interact more effectively, assimilate information and make informed choices.

For example, children are encouraged to develop new skills through co-active play, and tactile and sensory stimulation, and adults are helped to develop their communication and independence skills and access a range of local resources.

Intervenors can work in a range of settings with the individual as required, such as the family home or other living environment, or in the community.

Training for intervenors is available, provided by Sense and others, with several courses running each year in different locations. [Download our courses calendar \(.pdf, 608kb\)](#).

Who benefits from an Intervenor?

Intervenors usually work with children or adults who have severe congenital sight and hearing impairments, ie. they were born with these disabilities, or their condition occurred in their very early years. People who are congenitally deafblind may also have other difficulties such as learning or physical disabilities. A person with a single sensory impairment and other disabilities may also benefit from an Intervenor.

A flexible and tailor-made service

Both these services are based on an assessment of an individual's needs. The number of hours provided will vary according to individual requirements, and the service may be provided in the evenings or at weekends, as well as during weekdays.

To find out more about Sense services, [contact the Information and Advice service team](#).