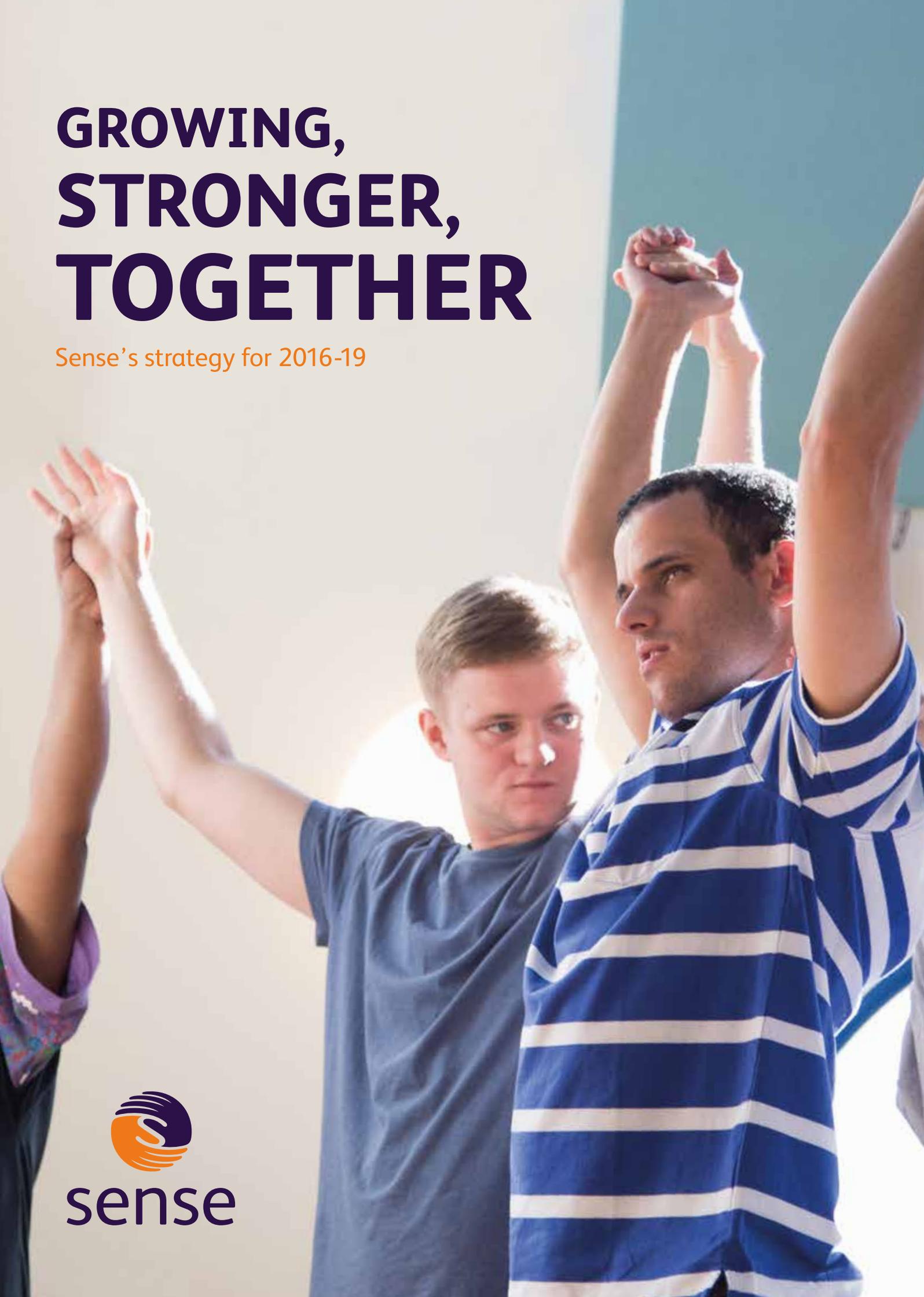


# GROWING, STRONGER, TOGETHER

Sense's strategy for 2016-19



sense

There are approximately 356,000 people in the UK who are deafblind



86% of our staff team “say they are proud to work for Sense” as measured in our 2015 Staff Opinion Survey (this score is 10% higher than that of benchmark comparison organisations)



By the year 2030, Sense estimates there will be well over half a million people with a sensory impairment over the age of 70 in the UK



Sense estimates that almost 250,000 people are blind or visually impaired and have additional disabilities



# Growing, Stronger, Together



**Sense has achieved a huge amount in the last 60 years** – developing into a respected specialist provider of services, shops, and activities, and an influential voice on behalf of those we support. We work across social care, health and education sectors, supported by committed staff and volunteers. In the UK we operate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and we also work closely with our sister organisation Sense Scotland. Our global arm Sense International operates in seven countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.

Since we were founded in 1955, the needs of the people we support have become more complex, and they continue to change. In our early years, the majority of those children and families we supported had been affected by rubella in pregnancy. Now, as those children reach adulthood, we continue to meet their changing support needs and support their transition into older age. Rubella remains of significant importance in our international work but is no longer associated with the same high levels of deafblindness in the UK.

Supporting people who are deafblind remains a core part of our work. However, our specialist skills that we developed 60 years ago mean we can diversify our support and reach a broader group who can benefit from the Sense approach. Today, a growing number of children are born prematurely or have other medical or complex conditions which may include sight and hearing impairments and additional learning disabilities.

There are many adults of a working age who may face enormous challenges, with needs ranging from the provision of information and advice, support to access their community, through to support in employment. There are also a growing number of older people who develop sight and hearing loss in later life. Indeed, by 2030 it is estimated that almost half a million people over 70 will be experiencing dual-sensory loss. It's imperative we keep pace with the changing needs of the population so that we remain relevant.

Total communication remains at the heart of what we do and connects the different groups we support. In our daily work can use more than 15 specialist communication systems. And 60 years since we started, some things don't change – families and individuals remain at the forefront of our work. We take an integrated approach to supporting individuals, recognising that common challenges are around information, mobility and communication.

“  
**Total communication remains at the heart of what we do and connects the different groups we support.**

”

Through our strategy, Growing, Stronger, Together we have extended the reach of Sense, and supported more people who are deafblind and/or have complex needs to reach their potential. We want to provide additional services in new areas and to more people, at the same time enabling individuals and families to meet, interact and support each other in facing life's challenges. To do this we need to grow diversity and increase our income.

We continue to hold our values dear and we are building on these. Sense's culture is based on trust. We have articulated the way we like to do things in a series of 'I-statements', which guide us in how we work with people. People are listened to, understood and respected. We are honest and open, and we encourage everyone to participate and contribute. We also ask people not to always take the safest option but to be innovative and energetic in making things happen and to celebrate success when it comes. 'No decision about me, without me' is a central value that we continue to champion in all our work.



# Our principles

Sense's principles underpin the three priorities of this strategy:

- Individuals and families receive the right support at the right time
- Personalisation is at the heart of everything we do
- We support people to increase and maintain their independence
- We ensure that individuals and families are fully involved, can participate fully and are central to our work
- We deliver positive outcomes for the people we support that include: enhancing wellbeing, building relationships, staying healthy, accessing new activities, and being part of their community.





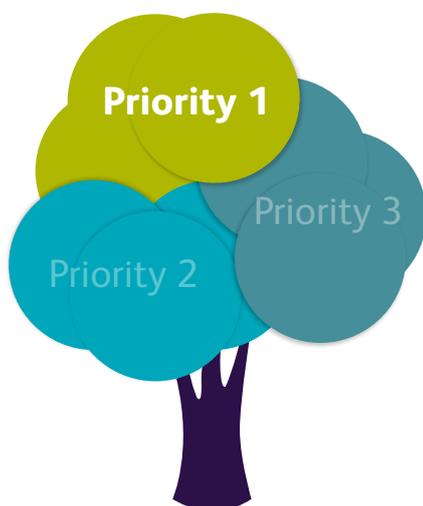
# Priority 1

## Increase awareness of Sense and the individuals and families that we support.

We believe that Sense, and the people we support, achieve remarkable things – and we want to do more to raise a greater level of public and funders’ understanding of this. We want to improve perceptions of our work so that more people connect with Sense both emotionally and professionally, and feel stimulated about giving their time and support for what we do. We want to tell those stories in ways that have real impact, and support the growth of the organisation.

### To meet this aim, we will:

- Raise the profile and awareness of Sense and the individuals we support and represent, so that we generate a deeper understanding, engagement, and excitement about our work with new and current supporters
- Transform people’s perceptions of what we do in order to drive more growth opportunities, and to extend our reach, influence and service provision to children, adults and older people
- Achieve sustained media and social media coverage in order to connect the different parts of Sense, reach new audiences and engage with supporters on a more meaningful and long-term basis
- Influence public policy and deliver campaigns that build broader insight into the barriers facing the individuals we support, that celebrate their achievements, and that use those campaigning opportunities to seek better support for individuals and families
- Improve the rights, services and support for individuals and families by bringing about changes in policy and practice, ensuring our work is evidence based with robust research, and proposing viable service solutions
- Ensure our marketing function powerfully communicates the distinctive expertise and added value that Sense delivers
- Ensure that the views and experiences of individuals and families are central to our work.



### Outcomes

By 2019 we will also have introduced a revitalised Sense brand that is recognised externally and owned internally and encapsulates our creativity. We will have increased awareness of our work and attracted new supporters to Sense. We will continue to speak out by campaigning to safeguard the rights and services of individuals we support.



# Priority 2

We will support more individuals and families by expanding our income.

We will take a collaborative and organisation-wide approach to building stronger relationships with supporters and to working in partnership with key funders to realise our goals. This isn't solely about revenue – it is also an issue of margin and surplus. It means we need to create growth that is sustainable.

## To meet this aim, we will:

- Grow our income streams across our services, fundraising and shops, and invest in new opportunities for Sense
- Support our managers to continuously improve the delivery, quality and financial viability of our services and shops
- Develop an integrated approach to marketing, income generation and supporter engagement, ensuring we maximise opportunities to engage with funders
- Develop Sense's website and routes to our services and markets
- Prioritise the following areas of new work: transition, short breaks, arts, sports and well-being, assessments and training and early intervention for children's services
- Scale up our work with commissioners, partners and professionals so that we can create new funding opportunities and extend the reach of our work
- Deliver TouchBase Pears in Birmingham and replicate similar services in Wales and Northern Ireland and the principles of TouchBase across the UK, including those elements run on a social enterprise model
- Make our services even better by embedding our quality assurance systems, demonstrating the outcomes and impact of our work, and embedding service user involvement in the organisation.



## Outcomes

By 2019, we will have delivered sustained growth in our services and increased our trading and fundraising income, diversified our funding streams, and delivered support to more of the people who need us – in ways that reflect their changing needs.

Our staff and supporters will understand the importance of growing our income and the sustainability of that growth, and are supported to respond quickly to new opportunities as they arise. We will deliver TouchBase Pears and position Sense as a social enterprise able to deliver solutions and generate alternative funding streams.

# Priority 3

Increase opportunities for individuals and families to do new activities and support each other.

We want to increase opportunities for individuals and families to take part in society, to extend ways for people to take part in different activities, to feel part of Sense and able to offer support to one another.

## To meet this aim, we will:

- Give people who use our services greater choice in our housing services including expansion of supported living opportunities
- Develop staff and expand volunteer-led services that strengthen Sense's capacity to provide opportunities for individuals to try new activities, get together with other people and make friendships
- Embed our approach to involvement so that individuals and families can participate fully
- Support people to participate as fully as possible in their local communities
- Embrace and embed technology more in our services and demonstrate how this improves choice, decision-making and independence
- Connect people with more opportunities to receive and provide peer support
- Foster more opportunities for families and individuals to participate in all our work and provide them with the support to take part in those opportunities.



## Outcomes

By 2019, we will have a reputation built on quality of service, innovation and maximising independence, choices and positive outcomes for individuals and families. We will ensure that the people we support and their families are at the centre of everything we do.





## Annual implementation plans

To implement this strategy we will produce annual implementation plans against which we will monitor delivery.

We will identify the key enablers to support its delivery:

- People (HR, coaching and training of staff),
- Processes (what processes we need to put in place to deliver the goals e.g. developing service models, supporting from PR and marketing, implementation of quality standards) and
- Finance (identify key sources of funding and improve use of current resources).

We will also identify a strong set of key performance indicators to measure success over the course of the strategy.

These indicators will include:

- Increased brand recognition
- Achievements and significant changes in policy
- Number of individuals supported
- Demonstrate improved outcomes for individuals receiving our services
- Growth of our direct funded work with children
- Increased net fundraising income
- Increased net growth in our housing and community services
- Increased net growth in our trading income
- Diversification of revenue streams
- Reach and depth of supporter engagement
- Strengthen and develop our staff and volunteers as key stakeholders.



sense

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