



North East Sensory Services Social Accounts April 2017- March 2018

Prove, Improve, Account!

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NESS is a complex organisation with many faces and a wide reach; there are similarities and differences throughout. Also, NESS is a dynamic organisation, which continually changes and evolves



Audited and accredited by the Social Audit Network
www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk

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(i) Social Audit Network UK Social Audit Statement

Standard Social Audit Statement

SOCIAL AUDIT STATEMENT: North East Sensory Services (NESS)

The Social Audit Panel has examined the draft Social Accounts submitted to us and discussed them in detail with Adam Hillhouse of NESS at the Social Audit Panel meeting held on 10 July 2018. Graham Findlay and Ann Robertson of NESS also contributed to discussions on a number of topics. I have examined the revised Social Accounts written at basic level which were prepared following the Social Audit Panel meeting and which have taken into account various points identified in the notes* of the Social Audit Panel Meeting. We also examined a sample of the data and the sources of information on which the Social Accounts have been based.

We believe that the process outlined above has given us sufficient information on which to base our opinion.

We are satisfied that, given the scope of the social accounting explained in the revised draft and given the limitations of time available to us, the Social Accounts are free from material mis-statement and present a fair and balanced view of the performance and impact of NESS as measured against its stated mission, values and objectives and the views of the stakeholders who were consulted.

In the notes of the Social Audit Panel meeting we identified a number of important issues to be taken into consideration during the next social audit cycle. In particular we would refer to the following:

- i) Set out a 3-5 year consultation strategy that focuses on particular outcomes/services each year, so that stakeholder groups are less likely to suffer survey fatigue, there is time for measurable change to occur and yet all key stakeholders are consulted on a regular basis;
- ii) Identify opportunities to compare performance – either internally over time, or against external benchmarks.

The members of the Social Audit Panel were:

- a) Julie Carr, Assisted Communications Policy Team Leader, Scottish Government
- b) Jonathan Reid, National Co-ordinator See Hear Strategy, the ALLIANCE
- c) Fiona Sandford, Chief Executive Officer, Visionary



Signed: Dated: 28 August 2018

Chair of the Social Audit Panel

* The notes of the Social Audit Panel meeting form part of the social accounting and auditing process and may, by arrangement, be inspected along with the full social accounts at the offices of North East Sensory Services at 21 John Street, Aberdeen. Members of the Social Audit Panel have acted in an individual capacity.

(ii) Introduction

“For charities and social enterprises, 'impact' is the difference you make. By focusing on your impact, you can make more of a difference through your work. This means planning what impact you want to have and how best to achieve it, collecting information about your impact, assessing what impact you're having, communicating this information and learning from it.”

Visionary's Inspiring Impact project

What is Social Accounting?

Social Accounting and Audit is a systematic and objective accounting procedure that enables organisations to measure a range of internal and external factors not covered by financial auditing alone. Social Accounts serve a dual purpose. As well as demonstrating the value of activities undertaken, they can be used as a tool for improving practice and increasing impact. Social Accounts are independently audited by a Social Audit Panel which is chaired by an accredited Social Auditor. For more information see www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk

Introduction to these social accounts-

Prove, Improve Account!

Five years ago, NESS' Board of Directors agreed that collecting and publishing audited Social Accounts would be a useful means of demonstrating the difference we make to individuals and the communities we serve. In short, to **prove** our effectiveness. Looking forward, we expected it would also give an indication of what else we needed to do to develop our capacity and deliver our best for the people we serve: to **improve** our outcomes.

Our first set of social accounts provided an holistic **account** of NESS operations. Our Social Impact Report, published soon after, gave an accessible and credible snapshot of NESS' impact and proved a useful tool for generating interest and informing people about the valuable life changing work we do.

Together with our strategic plan, it provided our direction for change and improvement, feeding in to each year's business plan.

In 2018, after a period of fairly constant change, NESS looks quite different to how it did five years ago, which, in many ways, is partly the legacy of that first social accounting experience. Taking evidence from data and experience, both quantitative and qualitative, these new social accounts demonstrate how we have built on our experience and show some of the learning and improvements that have come about as a result. Specific improvements are detailed at the end of this report.

NESS Never, Ever Stands Still

(iii) Scope of these Social Accounts

These accounts cover the financial year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. This is implicit in references to “this year”, “this accounting period” and “2017-18”.

They cover our operations which are summarised in the Theory of Change model on page 20. A fuller picture of our work can be gained by reading this report in conjunction with our Annual Report, which includes our directors and financial statements, available at Appendix 1.

This report was produced in accordance with the process recommended by the Social Audit Network UK (SAN). It includes audit by an independent panel, chaired by a SAN qualified social auditor, members of which are listed on page 4. In accordance with this approach, we compile these accounts using a combination of internally and externally generated data and consultations with key stakeholders. Full details of our stakeholders and methods of consultation can be found on Pages 23-24.

Where we have quoted comments in the accounts, we have selected these to be an illustrative sample of the balance of opinions from the consultations conducted and from sporadic feedback collected in this year. All quotes have been anonymised and can be attributed by reference at source rather than by identification of the contributor.

(iv) Welcome by John Legg, Chair of NESS

Achieving independence for blind and deaf people is our mission. **Our passion lies in continuously adapting and improving our services to make a genuine difference.**

Whether you are one of our 6,500 service users, a supporter, a stakeholder, an investor or are one of the many people, paid and unpaid, that deliver our services I want to ask a favour. Put on the kettle, settle down and take a little time out of your busy schedule to read this report. It's an easy and informative read that provides a fascinating insight into how NESS services work and the impact they have.

You may already be very familiar with financial or annual accounts. This report is a Social Account of how NESS has done during 2017-2018. It offers a unique opportunity to prove our operational effectiveness, to improve outcomes for service users and stakeholders and to provide a comprehensive account of our provision. Our first Social Accounts report was compiled in 2013 and led directly to a series of improvement actions. Building on these, NESS has grown and developed and now provides a record level of essential, high quality services to blind and deaf people across the North East of Scotland.

On one hand this report represents months of research, interviews, analysis and reflection. On the other, it represents a significant challenge to design and implement future improvements. As part of this process we would greatly value any comments, ideas or issues that you identify. Please forward them to either Graham Findlay, Chief Executive, or Adam Hillhouse, Head of Enterprise, using the contact details supplied

Thank you for taking the time to read this, your support is appreciated.

Finally, many thanks to all of those who contributed to the creation of such a thorough and engaging report.

Kind regards,

John Legg

Chair of the NESS Board of Directors

(v) The context in which we work by Graham Findlay, Chief Executive

Introduction

NESS is a leading provider of joint sensory services in Scotland. We have developed an integrated way of working that benefits all of our service user group, which includes people who are Blind, Partially Sighted, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafened and Deafblind. To be an effective provider, NESS needs to take part in, and contribute to, a number of strategic and representative bodies, both locally and nationally. NESS is well represented and frequently takes a leading role on such bodies as illustrated below.

Local Representation

NESS has services in 6 different local authority areas in Scotland. These are: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, Moray and Perth & Kinross. They range from a one to one project in Perth and Kinross to full statutory and non-statutory provision in other areas.

See Hear Strategy

This Scottish Government strategy has local implementation groups in each Local Authority area in Scotland.

NESS lead on the Aberdeen Group and are members of the Dundee, Angus, Aberdeenshire and Moray groups. Our CEO attends the National Leads meetings.

We are also members of local third sector forums, specialist forums, Third Sector Interface members, etc.

NESS has influenced change locally via the See Hear Group.

NESS were involved with the development of See Hear, and its draft version of the Sensory Impairment Strategy. NESS were able to access a range of funding for our own staff training during our organisations transition from a sight loss organisation to the first fully integrated sensory service provider. We were able to use 'pilot' money to upgrade our resource centres in Aberdeen and Elgin to become fully sensory accessible and a one stop shop for service users, no matter what their sensory loss is. We believe our Aberdeen Resource Centre in particular is an example of best practice and we have hosted a number of

organisations from across the UK who have visited to see the facility and services in practice and then try and develop their own provision. This includes a visit from Newcastle and Liverpool based blind societies. Pilot money was also used to develop our Hospital Information Service, which supports recently diagnosed people who have a significant sensory loss. This service is now an integral part of our service offering. NHS planners consulted NESS for mobility and signage advice on relocating the Eye Out Patients Department.

In Aberdeen, via the local See Hear group, we have supported the development of additional lip reading classes, additional awareness training, training for specialist groups and worked with Alzheimer Scotland locally to develop and deliver training for staff working with people who have dementia and a sensory loss. Referral routes from various provider organisations have been refreshed and improved.

NESS has been involved and influenced the move of the NHS Grampian Aberdeen Audiology Clinic to a new setting. From this we have developed a city centre Hear2Help Hearing Aid maintenance programme with support from the Audiology Clinic.

On a national scale, NESS was the only third sector organisation representing a local authority at the early stages of the See Hear Leads group. We were able to give a different and specialist perspective on sensory loss and our CEO gave a presentation to the whole group.

During 2017, the See Hear Strategy was reviewed by the Scottish Government using an external facilitator and based on the Logic Modelling assessment tool. Our CEO was one of only five individuals invited onto this panel. The outcomes are yet to be published.

Our Head of Corporate Services has helped develop the new register of sight loss with her input into the new Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) in conjunction with See Hear and the Scottish Government.

Local Business Representation

NESS is a member of the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Moray Chamber of Commerce and the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce. We are also members of the Aberdeen Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI). We were the first 3rd

sector organisation to host an SCDI networking event. To achieve this we gained sponsorship from the Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT).

Scotland Umbrella Groups

Scottish Council on Vision Impairment (SCOVl)

“**SCOVl** is an umbrella organisation that links and supports statutory and voluntary services for and of vision impaired people in Scotland.”

Our Head of Enterprise is our representative at both the members meetings and is a director of the SCOVl Board and regularly contributes to national developments and discussion. In the past, our CEO was Vice President of SCOVl for two years and President for a further two years.

deafscotland [sic] (formerly Scottish Council on Deafness [SCOD])

deafscotland is an umbrella body supporting and representing organisations working with people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind.

Until earlier this year, our CEO was a director of SCOD and had been for around 7 years. NESS continues to be a member and attends the National Council Meetings.

Both deafscotland and SCOVl see themselves as influencers of the Scottish Government and both run annual conferences.

Cross Party parliamentary Groups

NESS is a member of both the Cross-Party Group on Visual Impairment and the Cross-Party Group on Deafness. These are held at the Scottish Parliament. Our Client Services Manager attends the VI Group for NESS and our CEO attends the Deaf Group. Through these NESS has influenced the recent developments of statutory function in the Scottish sensory loss sector. NESS has had input into the development of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, achieving equity with the two official spoken languages of Scotland, and has helped to develop the new CVI registration process for people with serious sight loss in Scotland.

UK

NESS now has a significant influence on UK national developments within the sight loss sector. There aren't the same opportunities within the hearing loss sector though.

Visionary

NESS has always been involved with Visionary and its previous incarnation, NALSVI. Currently our CEO is chair of Visionary.

From the Visionary Website

"Visionary is a membership organisation for local sight loss charities. We are a locally led movement of national significance and, by joining Visionary, we believe that the voice of your organisation will be stronger and louder."

Visionary are developing across the UK, regional development networks of sight loss organisations. This will change the landscape of service provision and a range of services and standards will be introduced and the postcode lottery reduced and hopefully eradicated. Our influence in Visionary has helped move this agenda forward.

We provided a number of resources for the Visionary Knowledge hub to support the learning of other local societies. NESS also participated in the development of Visionary's "Inspiring Impact" project which developed a Theory of Change for the UK sight loss sector and helped to raise the profile of Impact Measurement for local societies.

Further, Visionary has a strategic alliance with the London-based charity Thomas Pocklington Trust. Our CEO was part of the Visionary Board who brokered the development of this alliance which has now transformed Visionary from an ideas organisation to an established service provider, expert organisation and influencer.

Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT)

From the TPT website

"At Thomas Pocklington Trust we are committed to increasing awareness and understanding of the needs of people with sight loss and to developing and implementing services which meet their needs and improves lives".

Currently our CEO is a director of TPT. The NESS influence with TPT has not only helped with the development of the alliance with Visionary but has been influential in the change in direction of TPT who are now using and growing their assets for the development of services, and research to benefit people who have a significant sight loss.

Vision UK Strategy

From the Vision UK Strategy Website

“Vision UK will work in collaboration with partners across the eye health and sight loss sector to deliver positive change for blind and partially sighted people.”

Currently our CEO represents Visionary on this board. Still at an early stage in its development we hope that our influence here will help shape future health and social care provision as well as research into the treatment and cures of sight loss conditions.

There are plans to map the prevalence of sight loss for the whole of the UK, which we believe will be a future game changer in how sight loss is seen and viewed across the UK. We expect this to show significant growth as longevity continues to increase.

Summary

NESS is a leading provider of sensory services in our area, but **our reach and influence goes much wider**. We are working with others in our sector to develop as well as to help influence decision makers across the country, in pursuit of our Mission and Vision and in keeping with our values.

Graham Findlay

Chief Executive

(vi) Our area of work

NESS is active across the North East of Scotland - from the Moray Firth to the Firth of Tay and in all its many and varied communities. There are people with sensory loss in all of them. Our region includes six local authority areas and both Grampian and Tayside regional NHS boards. It covers roughly one sixth of the land mass and one tenth of the population of Scotland.



The prevalence of sensory loss

According to the Scottish Government¹, significant sight loss affects over 180,000 people in Scotland, and the vast majority are older people. In 2010, there were 3.6 people registered blind for every 1,000 people in the population of Scotland. Just under three-quarters of registered blind persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds being over 75 years old. There are significantly more women registered blind (61 per cent) than men (39 per cent). Almost 44 per cent of all registered blind people are women aged 75 and over. This is also reflected in new registrations where around 42 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over.

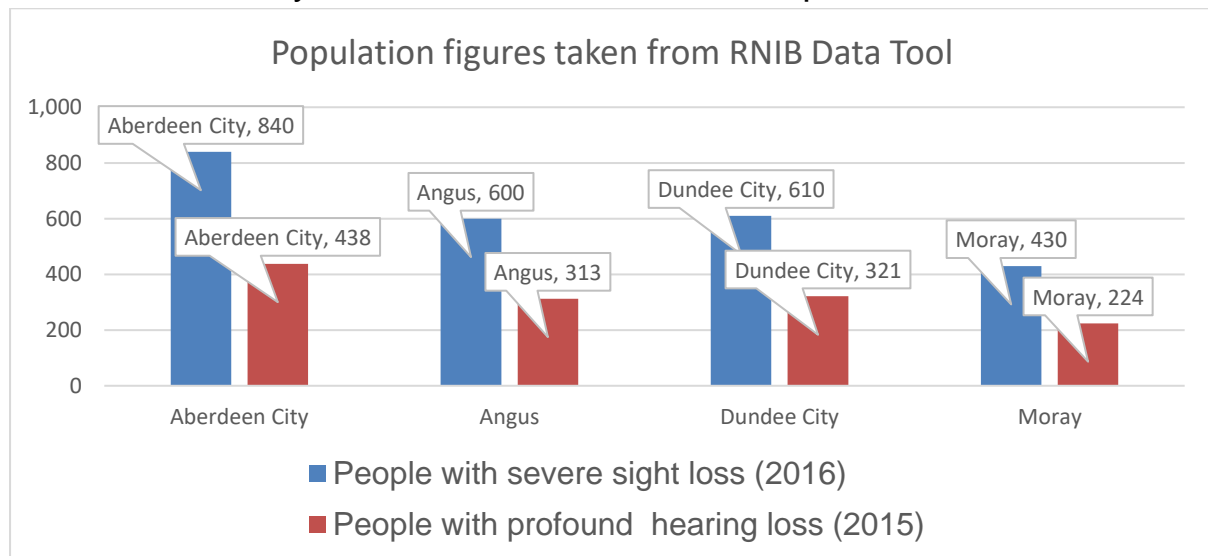
According to Action for Hearing Loss² there are 950,000 people in Scotland with some degree of hearing loss, 76,000 of whom have severe or profound hearing loss. Over 70 per cent of those with severe or profound hearing loss are over the age of 70.

There are difficulties in trying to establish the extent of the potential service user population in the region we serve, other than those known to NESS. RNIB's sight loss data tool allows data to be extracted by UK local authority areas. Although some of the data is eight years old, one

¹ See [Hear](#): A strategic framework for meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment in Scotland (ANNEX A)

² <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/our-research-and-evidence/facts-and-figures/>

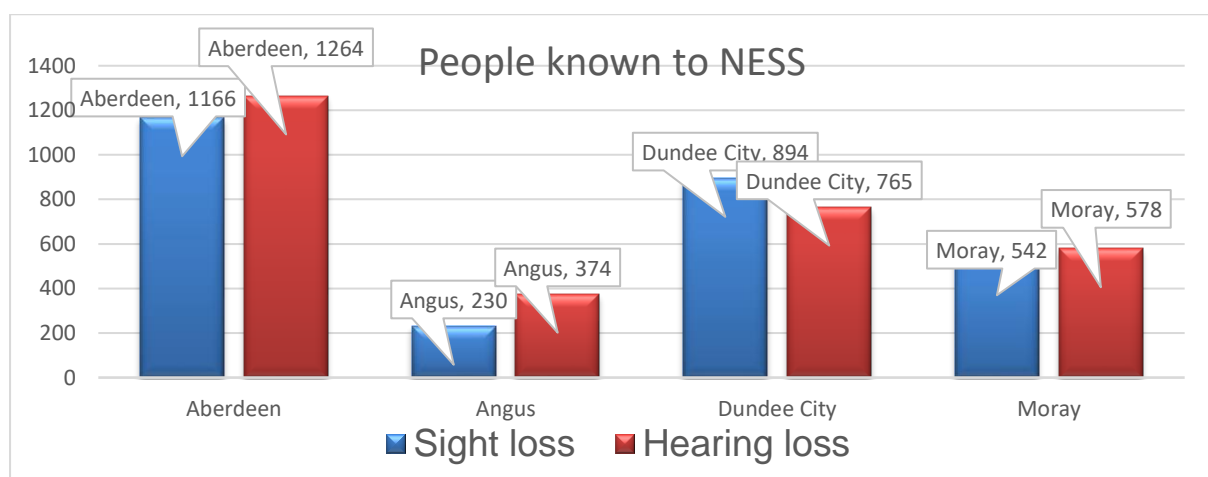
expects fairly minimal changes to the figures in under a decade and the proportions are likely to be similar. They provide an indication of what the incidence may be in the areas in which we operate.



ⁱRNIB <http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool>

Our reach

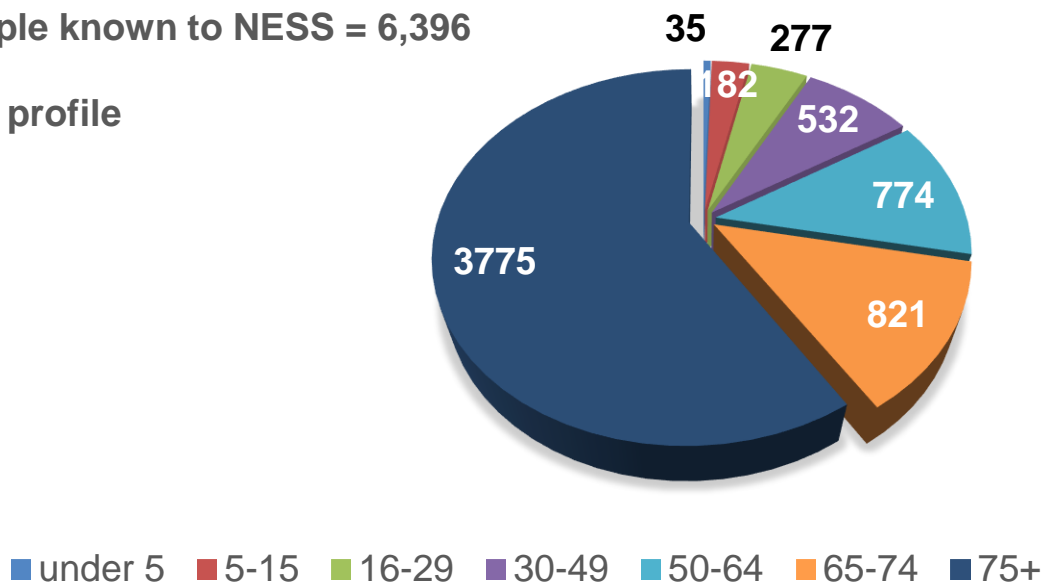
In all areas where NESS holds the Register of Blind and Partially Sighted people, more people are known to NESS than exist in the data tool statistics. This illustrates that NESS sees more than just those who are Registered. Angus Council, which holds its own Register, rightly does not share personal data with us unless a service user is referred to our Rehab and equipment service. This difference could potentially identify a pocket of unmet need in Angus. Compared with the numbers of people known to NESS who are deaf or have hearing loss, the data tool statistics are consistently lower across the board.



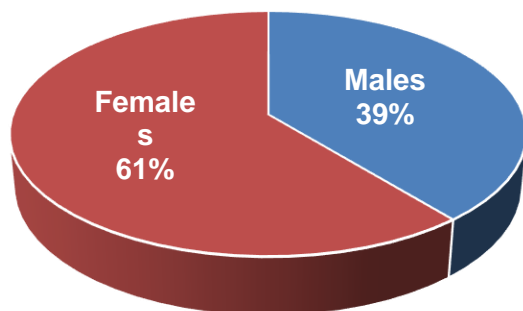
NESS Service user profile as at 31 March 2018 (see Appendix 2 for more detail) **60% of our service users are over 75**

People known to NESS = 6,396

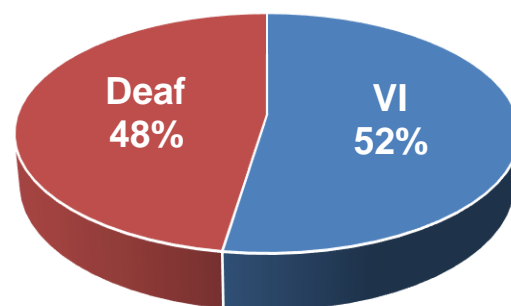
Age profile



**People known to NESS
Gender profile**



**People known to NESS
Primary classification**



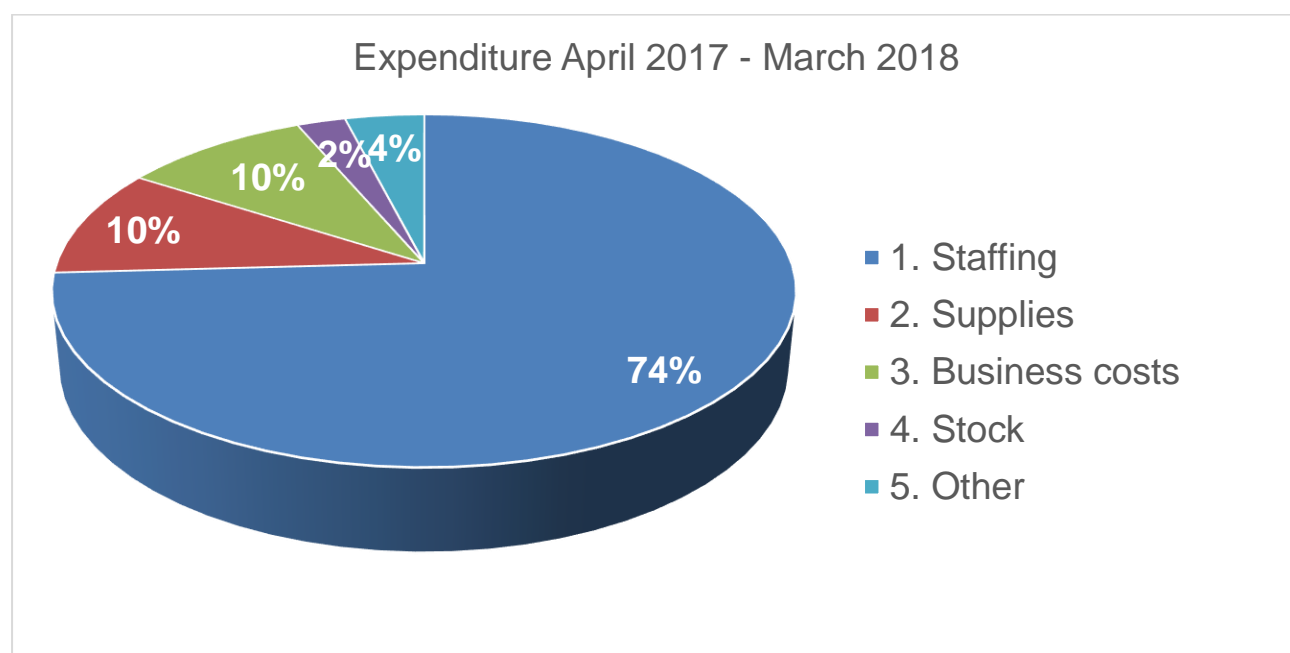
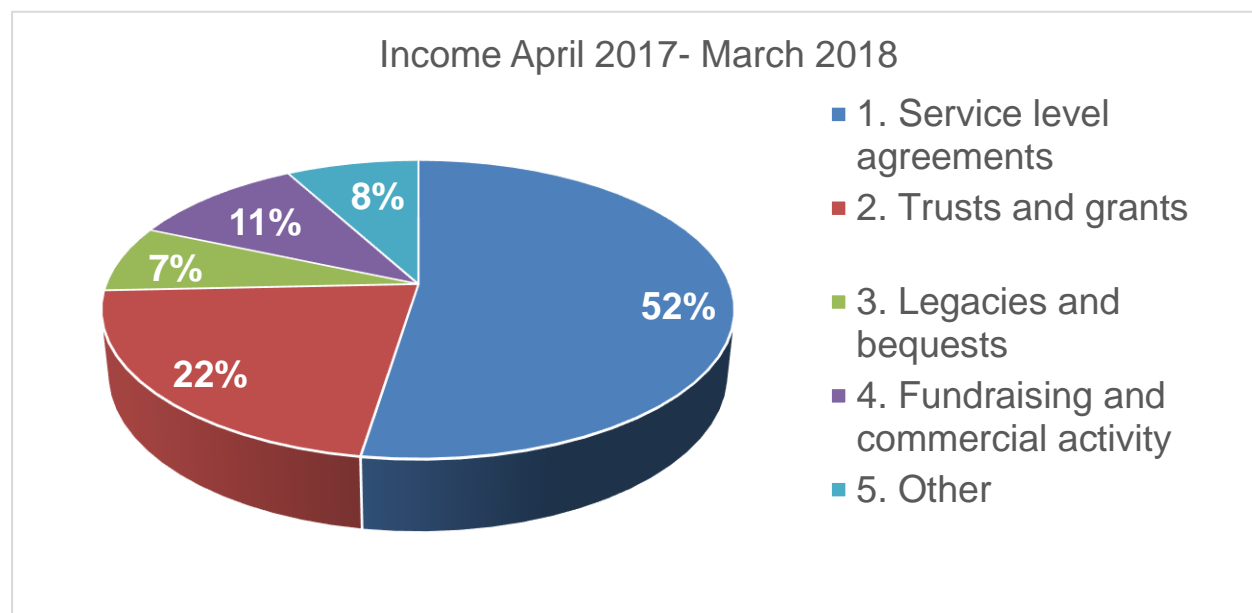
Key (used throughout)

B =	Registered Blind
PS =	Registered Partially Sighted
N =	Not Registered but with impaired vision
D =	Deafened/ Deaf
DB =	Deafblind (Registered Blind or Partially Sighted with significant hearing loss)
DBSL =	Deaf BSL user
HH =	Hard of hearing
VI =	Vision impaired

(Table also shown at end on page 89)

(vii) Income and expenditure

As a charity, over the year April 2017 – March 2018, NESS' income was £ 2.2 Million, drawn from four main funding sources.



NESS made an operational deficit of just under £ 0.1M which was funded from charitable reserves.

1. Our Mission, vision and objective

Our Mission:

“Achieving independence for blind and deaf people.”

“North East Sensory Services supports people with serious sight or hearing loss to overcome practical and emotional challenges and achieve independence.”

NESS exists to help people overcome barriers and the potentially devastating effects of serious sight or hearing loss.

We want to achieve our mission in the most effective and sustainable way, so that as many people as possible are better equipped to deal with whatever their challenges may be.

Our vision:

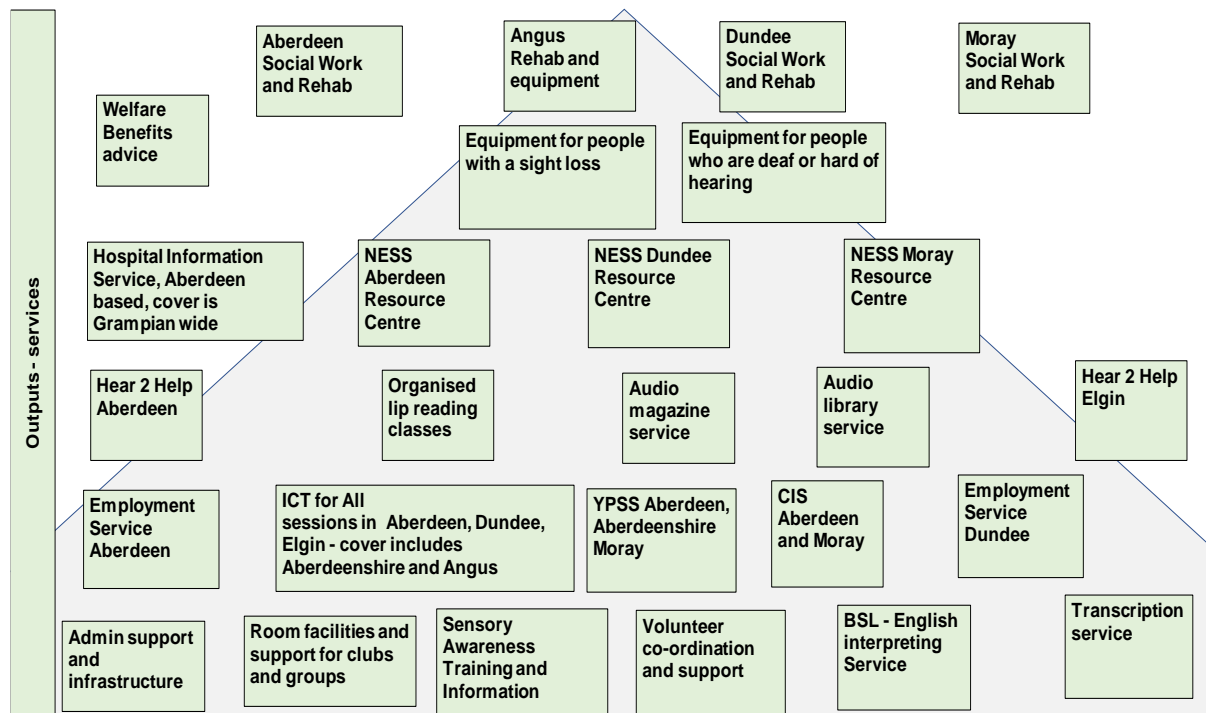
“A Society in which people living with a sensory loss are able to fully participate and contribute to the same level as those without a sensory loss.”

Every individual has their own specific needs and wants, which are different, although many share similar themes. **We focus on solutions, not problems and try and help people find their own, by providing them with the information, equipment and support they need to do so.** Often, adjusting to living with sensory loss we find, they need to learn new and different means of reaching their intended outcome. Those means vary, what suits one person will not be acceptable or useful to another and so we employ a number of different service inputs.

Service inputs

The following illustration is extracted from NESS' Expanded Theory of Change which can be found in full at Appendix 3.

These are the North East Sensory Services:



Where possible we offer people a range of options and they decide what to engage with: as much or as little as they feel they need or want.

Additionally:

- NESS services are delivered at no cost or at a minimal charge to the service user.
- NESS also helps their families and carers by offering information, sensory awareness training, advice and support.
- NESS provides training, advice and specialist consultation to other organisations, so they and their employees or students may become better equipped to engage people with a sensory impairment. This supports our Vision and helps them improve their practice to meet their statutory requirements under the Equalities Act 2010.



“Good at individual support and not 'one size fits all'. The values and approach of staff at NESS make it a pleasure to work with.”

Quote from NESS Members survey 2018

Our objective:

Our objective is to **enable people with sensory loss to reach and maintain the intended outcomes we call ‘Living it My Way’.**

The UK Vision Strategy’s **‘Seeing It My Way’** outcomes framework was developed following a study of experiences outlined by a group of people with sight loss (ANNEX B). It aims to ensure that every person with sight loss has access to the same range of information and support in order to live independently. The outcomes listed under this initiative include people learning new ways of completing tasks that others take for granted, people being kept up to date with new developments and products, people travelling outside their homes confidently and safely and on their own terms, and people having the tools, skills and confidence to communicate, learning new ways of reading, writing and keeping in touch. NESS shares these aims and wishes to extend them to people who are deaf and have hearing loss.

Our '**Living it My Way**' outcomes build on this to include factors important to deaf people and those with hearing loss as well. The process we went through is summarised in Appendix 5.

NESS' 'Living it My Way' outcomes
based on the UK vision strategy's "Seeing it my way" outcomes.
1. I make my own choices and decisions about my personal and social life including looking after myself, my home and my family.
2. I have people to talk to and somewhere to go if and when I want to.
3. I understand my vision and/ or hearing condition and can manage its impact, with or without help. I get on with my life.
4. I can get out and about. I find my way around and can travel where I want to go. (I may use support or equipment to help).
5. I make the best use of my remaining sight and/ or hearing to do what I want to do. (I may use equipment, aids and/ or technology to help me).
6. I receive the statutory benefits to which I am entitled.
7. I can buy the things I want and use the services I need (I may use communication support to help).
8. I can access work, volunteering and learning/ education opportunities, if I want to. (I may use support or equipment to help).
9. I don't feel excluded from society and can contribute and participate as much as I want to.

Personal Outcomes

There is a vast spectrum of need and capacity for achievement, and we have found it is very difficult to combine personal desired outcomes into statistics, as each individual starts out at a different point, with an individual perspective. Individuals can and do supply feedback about

their own experience of NESS, but, because these are all subjective and different, it often makes it difficult to use them as evidence to illustrate an over-all picture of the organisation's effectiveness. We developed our organisational "Living it my Way" outcomes to frame these individual experiences against shared standards which are valued by people with sensory loss, leading, or trying to lead, an independent life.

Each service user has their own intended personal outcomes, which can change and develop over time. For example,

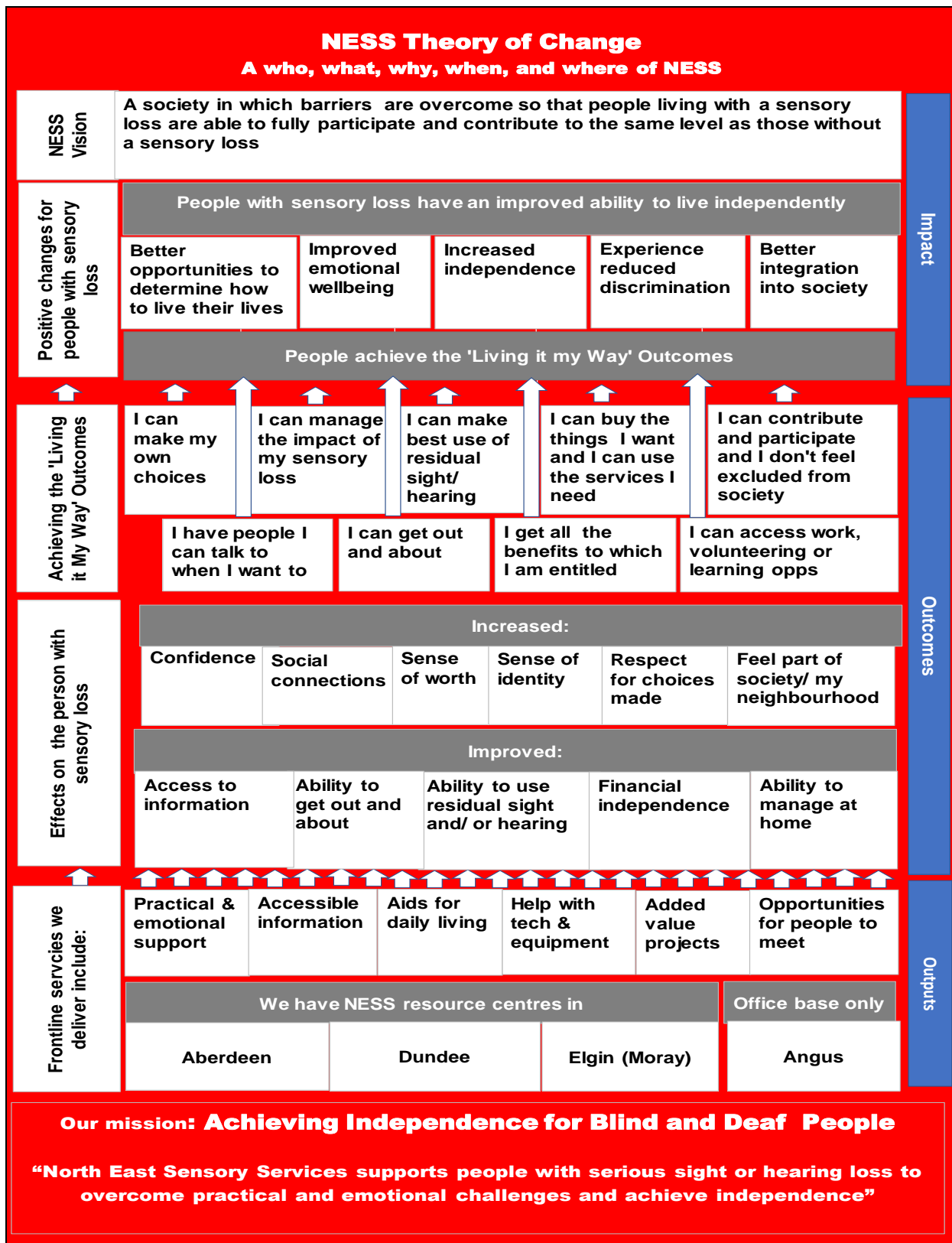
Dot, an elderly lady, lives in a city centre tenement flat on her own, having lost 90% of her useful vision due to macular degeneration and registered blind, she has no regular company and is recovering from a fall.

Aiden, a profoundly deaf and partially sighted school-leaver who lives with his family on the outskirts of town, is hoping to go away to college next year. Although he finds his own way to school and can take the bus independently, his mum buys all the shopping and does all the cooking.

Both have the problem of not being able to buy groceries for themselves. On the face of it, both would be working on outcome 7, however their best solutions may be very different. One possible solution; they could both learn to do online shopping and get their groceries delivered, as many other service users have done, but this doesn't get them out and about.

Living it Dot's Way is different to Living it Aiden's Way. Dot wants to be confident enough to leave the flat, to get to the shop safely and have a chat with the shop assistant when she gets there (Outcome 2 and 9) for her milk and a daily paper. Aiden is seeing this as a stumbling block (amongst others) to going away to college (Outcome 1 and 8) and starting a big adventure.

2. NESS Theory of change (Concise version)



An expanded version is available at Appendix 3 including outputs, previously mentioned on page 16.

Theory of Change: Narrative

NESS took part in Visionary's Inspiring Impact project in 2017, which was aimed at establishing shared impacts across the UK sight loss sector. Knowledge gained enabled us to assemble our own NESS Theory of Change. It has been developed while collating these Social Accounts and shows how our '**Living it My Way**' outcomes may help evaluate the effectiveness of our practices and principles. Although we were able to use them as a basis for consultation with stakeholders, it will take further time to embed them in all our practices.

High level impact

NESS' overall aim is for people with sensory loss to be able to live as independently as possible and to fully participate and contribute to the same level as anyone else in North East Scotland. With such an ambitious aim, we recognise we will only be able to achieve our desired impact through effective co-ordination both within NESS and by working in partnership with all other contributing agencies.

We contributed to the UK sight loss sector's Theory of Change developed by Visionary's Inspiring Impact project. Our high level impacts echo the four high level impacts identified in the UK sight loss sector's Theory of Change developed by Visionary's Inspiring Impact project. NESS identified a further impact, which can be seen in our Theory of Change diagram. We understand these five impacts as:

➤ Better Opportunities

Barriers to self-determination for people with sensory loss exist at a number of levels in society including lack of accessibility, unconscious bias and discrimination in everyday situations. To increase opportunities for self-determination, information needs to be made more accessible, for example: voting systems, medical information and transport information.

➤ Improved emotional wellbeing

The life changing effects of serious sensory loss on an individual and their family often have a detrimental impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health. Sensory loss is a major factor contributing to feelings of isolation and loneliness and sometimes anger and loss of confidence. Being able to manage the impact of sensory loss by learning alternative

ways of doing things and keeping or re-establishing independence help reduce feelings of vulnerability, overcome self-doubt and build resilience and motivation.

➤ **Increased independence**

Independence covers a range of outcomes and will vary for different individuals depending on need and expectation. What these outcomes have in common is that they enable the person with sensory loss not only to make their own choices, but to do things for themselves.

Short-term outcomes that contribute to greater independence include:

- being better able to make use of their residual sight or hearing;
- being better able to get out and about;
- increased ability to manage at home;
- improved ability to participate in the workplace and in public;
- better able to access information;
- greater financial independence.

➤ **Experience of reduced discrimination**

Much of the discrimination experienced by people with sensory loss is unintentional, but that does not make it any less damaging. Raising awareness of peoples' rights and needs and highlighting the means of equality of access, makes for more inclusive environments. Increasing public awareness should help to make access fairer and more equitable.

➤ **Better integration into society**

Feeling 'part of society' depends on individual factors such as having a strong sense of identity and self-worth, but also on societal factors including more inclusive environments and greater public awareness of the impact of sensory loss. Many of the outcomes related to wellbeing also contribute to people with sensory loss being more integrated in society, in particular stronger social connections, greater sense of self-worth and greater confidence. For most people, feeling assimilated in a local neighbourhood and included in the wider citizenship are both important.

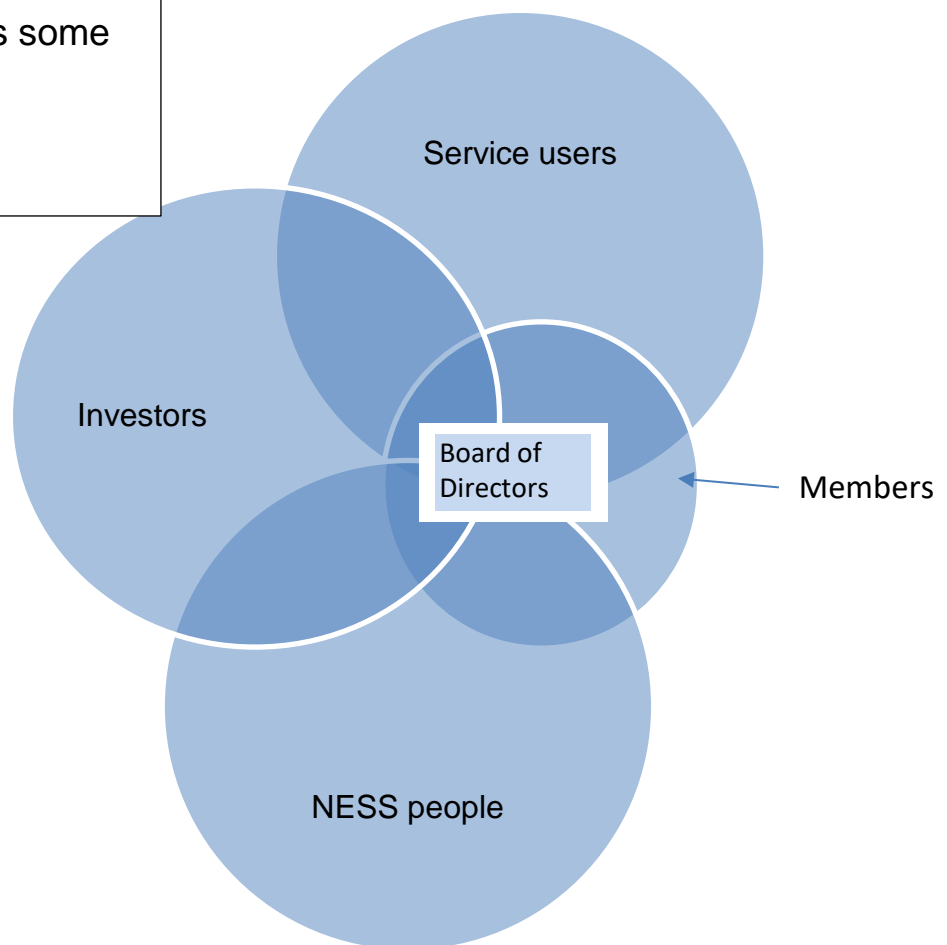
3. Key stakeholder analysis and consultation methodology

Investors

People and corporate bodies who contribute resources, which NESS uses to perform its activities. Resources include statutory investment, charitable donations, sponsorships, grants and trust funds as well as some contributions in kind.

Service users

People with serious sensory loss (and their families and carers), living in the North East of Scotland, who are eligible to use NESS.



NESS people

People who provide their time and skills in the support of NESS service users, in either a paid or unpaid capacity: Employees, Volunteers, including Directors and some Members (More detail on page 79- 80).

We are in regular contact with our stakeholders in a variety of ways; from news and information for service users, to regular monitoring meetings with our statutory investors and we use a wide variety of reporting mechanisms. We encourage communication and have identified feedback routes to capture stakeholder feedback, see Appendix 4, as mentioned on page 18. As a legacy of our previous Social Accounts, we now routinely log unsolicited feedback. A representative sample is included throughout these Accounts. Indicated thus:

Consultation methodology

We are keen to understand our stakeholders' view of our performance against our mission, organisational outcomes and the values we espouse. We therefore consulted with them in different ways.



Method	What was examined	Who was asked
Customer Survey	Living it My Way outcomes	Service users, volunteers who are also service users
Member Survey	Core values	Members of NESS (service users, directors, ex staff, current staff etc)
Footfall Study	What people use NESS for	Using any customer-initiated contact – face to face, email, phone
Audio magazines	Effectiveness of audio magazines	Users of audio magazines
liP Survey;	Leadership at NESS	NESS people: Employees and volunteers
Individual reporting requirements to all Grant Awarding bodies and Trust Funds	No additional research or consultation took place with this group for these Social Accounts ³	(Investors)

³ In the last Social Accounts none of our donors or investors responded to our specific request for feedback

4. Reaching the outcomes: Customer Survey 2017

NESS sent out the Customer Survey in December 2017. The survey was designed in two parts. The first part asked the service user to identify from a set of 17 statements what help they got from NESS. These responses were not fully analysed as they were only included to give context to individual responses that might need a follow up. Observation shows an uneven spread with all options being chosen, some more popular than others. Most respondents gave multiple selections. Those who chose single options mostly selected option 5, “Home equipment especially for deaf people (like a flashing doorbell or listening equipment that works with my hearing aids)”.

The second part asked them to comment about the effectiveness of the help they got from NESS using a set of outcome focused indicator statements and a traditional Likert scale using smiley faces and a box that allowed the service user to indicate if they did not require that specific type of help. A copy of the Customer Survey is available in Appendix 6 (a). We also asked them what they used NESS for. In the previous Social Accounts, we had asked people to select from a list of services and many respondents had appeared unclear which services they had used.

Selecting the survey population:

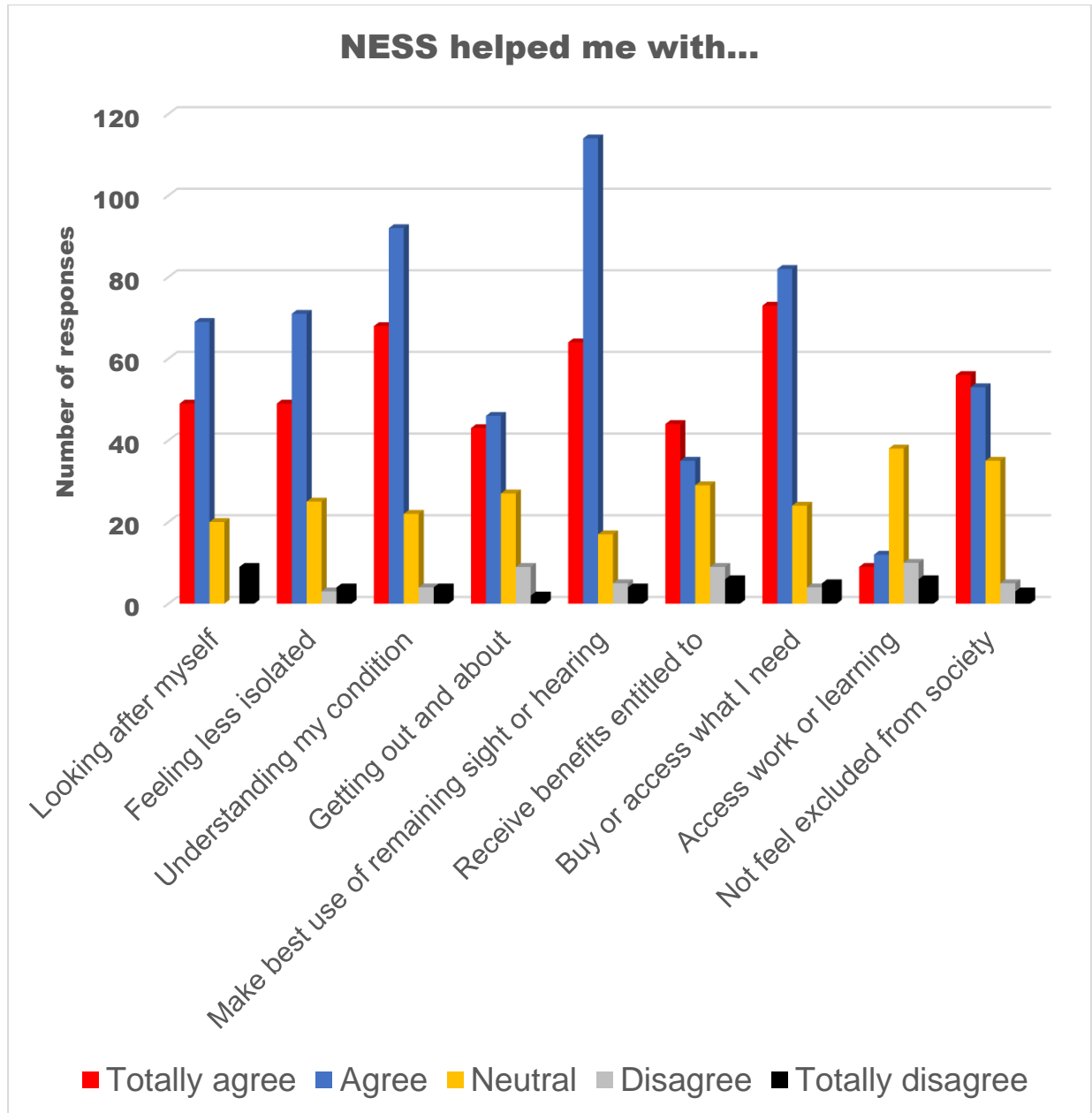
Drawn from our NESS database of people who have used NESS services and who were happy to receive our mailings, we focussed the survey population to include only people who have had some active contact with any of our services in the last 24 months. This was 1,816 or 31% from our total of 5,760 on the mailings list. It includes residents of each of the five local authority areas⁴ and all our service user categories⁵. The Survey document was produced in large print, audio and BSL DVD formats to cater for all needs and preferences. Each mailing included a pre-paid envelope for the return.

⁴ Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, and Moray

⁵ People who are Registered Blind (B) and Partially sighted (PS), people who are Deaf and use Sign Language (DBSL), people who are deaf, deafened (D) and hard of hearing (HH). People with sight loss and people with hearing loss, people who are Deafblind (DB) and people who have both sight loss and hearing loss, as well as people with hearing impairments such as tinnitus.

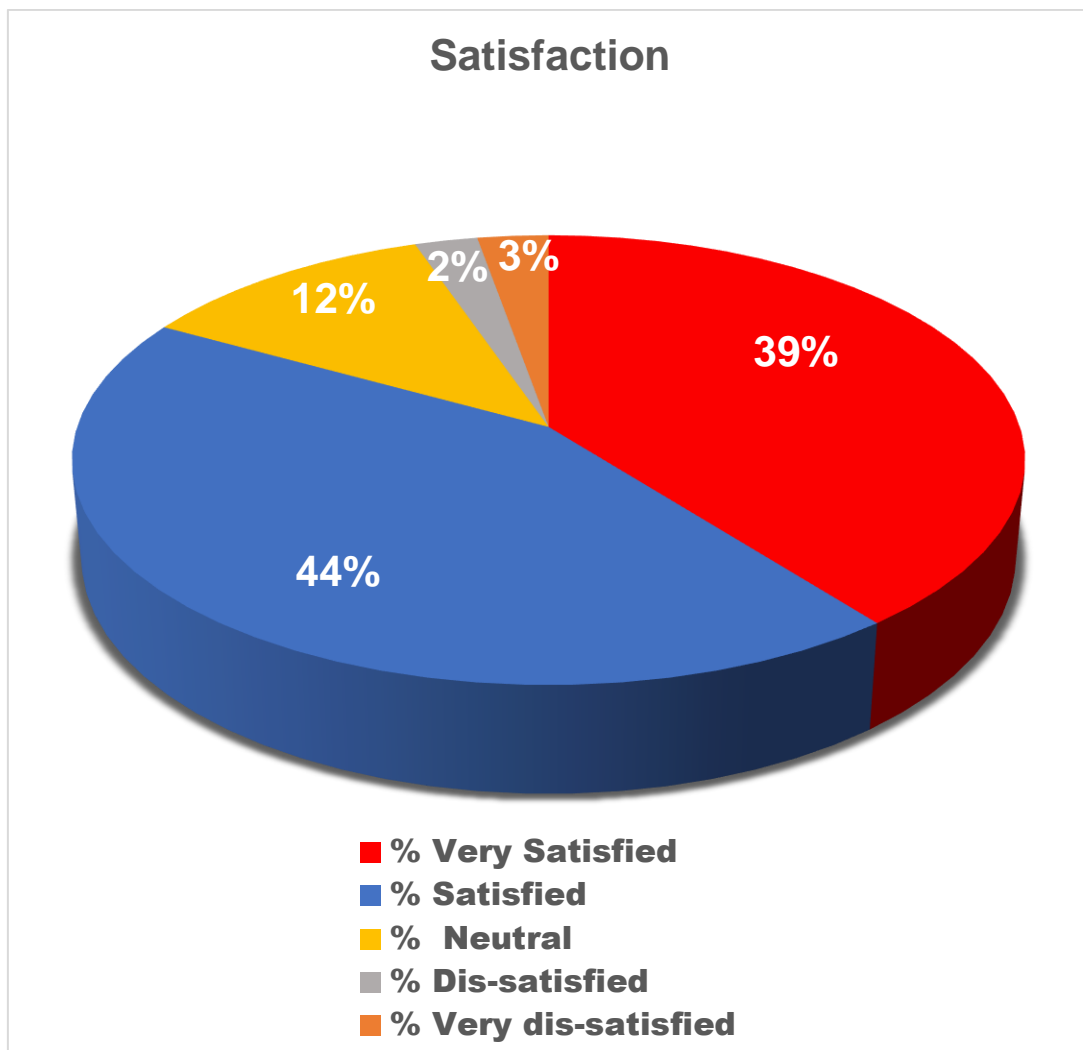
Responses

301 people returned the survey (17%). Analysis of the responses is available in Appendix 6 (b).



Where people Totally agree or Agree with an indicator statement, we take this as a proxy measure of satisfaction with their experience of NESS. Where people Disagree or Totally disagree we take this as dissatisfaction.

The results indicated that **83% of our service users are satisfied with the support and service they get from NESS.**



Service users were encouraged to comment and offer feedback in their responses and were given the option of anonymity. A representative sample of these comments is included throughout these Accounts.

Indicated thus:



Where dissatisfaction was expressed about specific issues we identified these for action, where they had given their name and contact details on the survey return. Thirteen follow up actions were made. Seven of these required further inputs from services.

5. Living the values: Member survey 2018

In March 2018, we carried out a member survey, see Appendix 7(a). Using a similar Likert scale, it asked all our 98 members⁶ if they considered that NESS achieves its intended impact when measured against our Mission. It also asked how we perform relative to our core values - that NESS people should be:

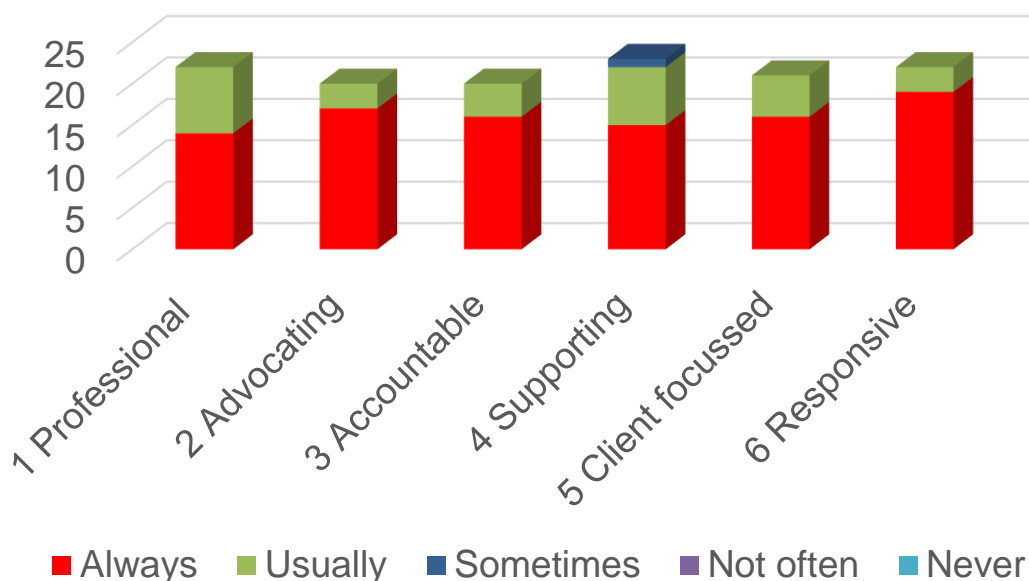
- Professional
- Advocating
- Accountable
- Supporting
- Client focussed
- Responsive

23 people (23.5%) returned the survey.

95% of these said that NESS achieves its intended impact when measured against its mission.



How does NESS live by each of its values?



⁶ 'Members of NESS' is explained on page 76

76% of NESS members felt we always live by these values and 23% felt we usually do.

Members were also encouraged to comment and offer feedback in their responses and were given the option of anonymity. A representative sample of these comments is also included throughout these Accounts. Indicated thus:



For more detail, an analysis report is available as Appendix 7(b).

6. **NESS People: Investors in People consultation**

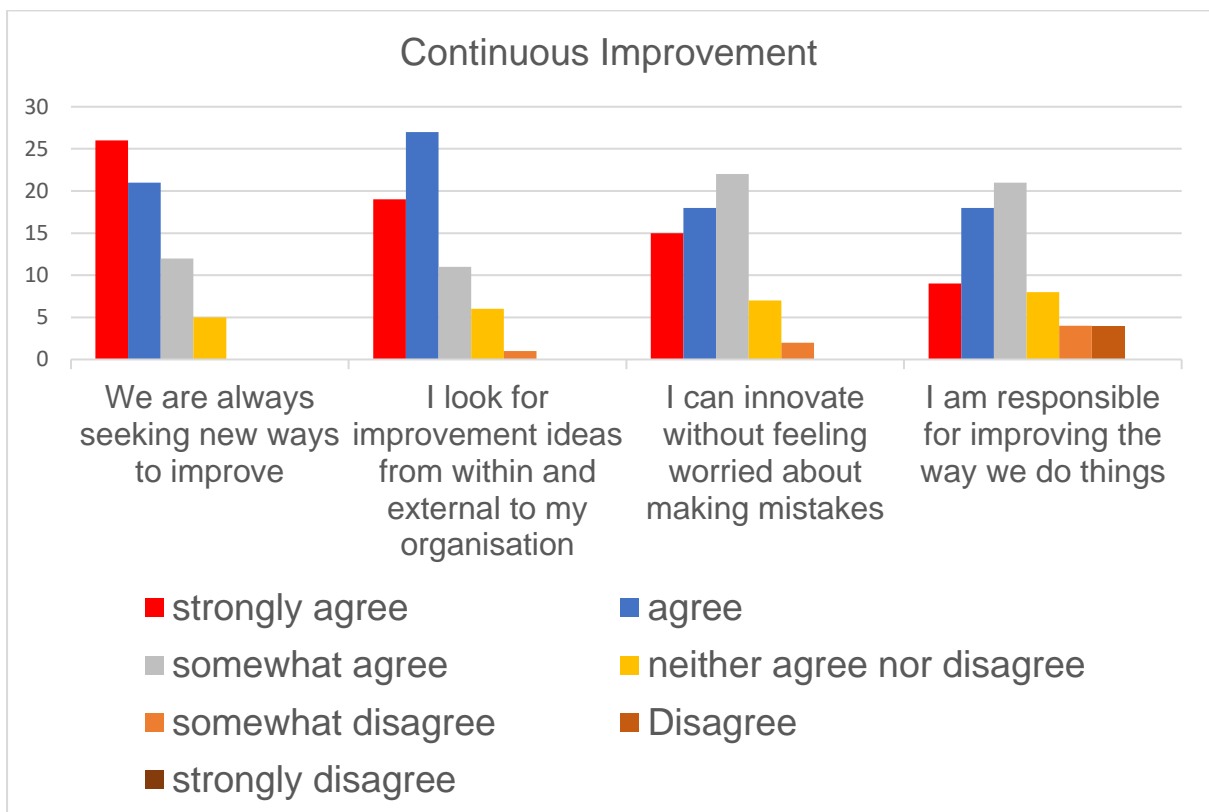
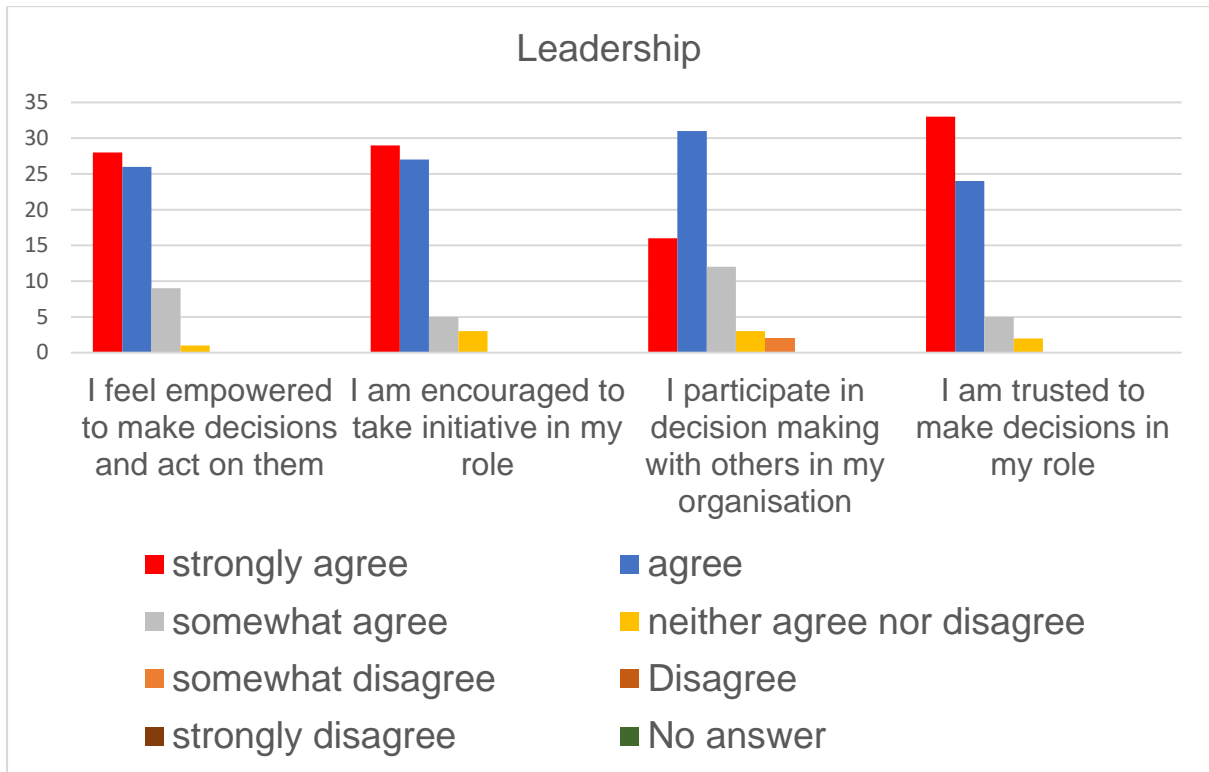
As part of our ongoing commitment to continuing improvement, we have been using the Investors in People framework to enhance our business plan and strategic development, which translates into better performance and improved outcomes for the people we support. NESS has been accredited with the Investors in People standard since 2010, also achieving first Bronze, then the Gold award in 2016. We decided not to carry out additional consultations with our people, including both paid staff and volunteers, during this period, especially as several may have also been consulted in the Members survey or the Customer survey (see Stakeholder analysis and consultation methodology on pages 25 and 26).

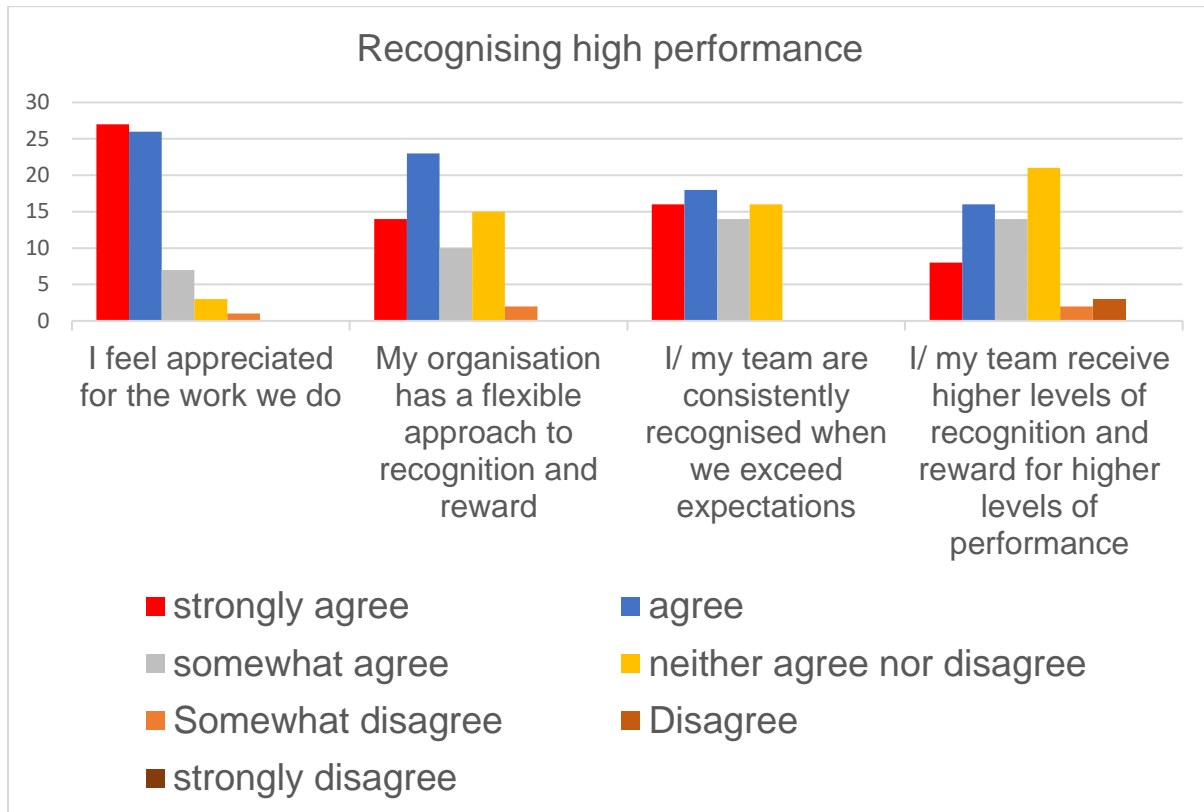
Leadership and performance

We are currently in the middle of a cycle of consultations and feedback sessions with our people using the Investors in People framework. They have been considering NESS' performance as a people organisation using nine indicator questions, and in discussion, specifically:

1. Leadership: How can NESS develop leaders and choose people for selected roles based on proven track record?
2. Continuous Improvement: How we can ensure we can innovate without fear and all be responsible for improvements?
3. Recognising High Performance: Where does that recognition come from and what more are we looking for?

The process began prior to this social accounting period and will conclude after it has finished. The following provides a picture of their responses for these three topics:





55 staff members were surveyed and the response rates were:

- 80% Aberdeen
- 90% Moray
- 60% Dundee

120 Volunteers including the directors were surveyed. 50% of the Board responded and 10% of the other volunteers responded.

The completed survey formed a basis for intense discussion summarised by the liP adviser as follows:

- Debate on what is meant by High Performance (HP)
- Desire to agree what HP looks like – maybe a topic for teams?
- Concern that rewarding HP may be divisive (need to determine what HP is)
- Belief that 1to1s are currently used to recognise HP
- Long Service Awards being extended beyond 10 years
- Real belief that it is feedback from Service Users that counts.
- Followed by thoughts that this could be better communicated

A report that was presented to staff in March 2018, feeding back this consultation, is available at ANNEX C.

7. Our investors

Many of our investors, including statutory bodies and grant awarding agencies require reports against project specific objectives. This being the sole aspect of the organisation in which they have an interest, they are reluctant to comment on factors they interpret as outside this scope.

Our successes in securing repeat investment indicates satisfaction with how they view our performance.

Repeat investors from across the spectrum of commercial, public and voluntary sectors include:

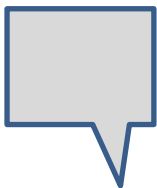
- **The National Lottery**
- **Aberdeen City Council**
- **The Moray Council**
- **Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB)**
- **The Robertson Trust**
- **BBC Children in Need**
- **Aberdeen University Students Association (AUSA)**
- **Aberdeen Solicitors Property Centre (ASPC)**
- **Amplus energy**

Any charity will tell you resources are increasingly scarce and competition for them is fierce. Those who have chosen to provide us with funds have also invested their faith in our ability to make a positive impact in the lives of the people we support. NESS is grateful to all our investors as we work to repay their trust.

8. Report on Performance and Impact

NESS' unique approach is based on the individuality of each person, and what they might need in order to accomplish things they want and need to do for themselves. Everyone has their own aspirations - including what they want from NESS. These are reflected in our organisational outcomes.

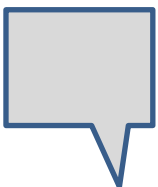
Our social workers and rehabilitation workers swiftly assess people facing potentially catastrophic change from across the sensory loss spectrum, and begin to deliver individualised interventions, within six weeks of receipt of referral. Accordingly, people are not kept waiting for the support, equipment or information they need, which can have a life-changing impact on their level of functioning, helping to maintain their self-esteem, confidence and resilience.



“We found your manner and the information you gave us of considerable benefit. We appreciate this advice, and we look forward to having the equipment.”

“Sporadic feedback” log, Dundee service user

The big advantage of **our integrated service model** is that for the many who are facing a dual sensory loss, particularly those of advanced years, it **is more efficient and has a greater impact**, as they don't have to travel between centres or tell the same story twice. This lady wrote to thank us, relating her experience of NESS as a dual sensory impaired service user:



“I am so grateful to NESS for all they have done to make my life easier. I am registered partially sighted and classified as severely deaf. Your worker was excellent instructing me on the use of the white cane to be able to use as my sight deteriorates. When we moved home she inspected the property and gave practical advice on how to make our living conditions better. Some simple adaptations have made a difference - such as coloured

tape on the inside of cupboard doors so that I'm less likely to walk into them when I inadvertently leave them open. Bump-on stickers on my cooker indicate the position of the rings. I also have peace of mind in case of fire - as I am totally deaf after my hearing aid is removed at night. A vibrating alarm has now been installed under my pillow. Invaluable information was given about the type of lampshades I should buy and the best kind of lighting throughout my home for maximum benefit. A flashing doorbell ensures that no callers are missed - the list goes on"

"Sporadic feedback" log, service user

Our proactive 'log, report and respond' approach to evaluating each service user's experience, noting comments and acting upon them, helps keep team members responsible for their own performance and motivated towards continuous improvement.

We don't always get it right, as this member tells us...

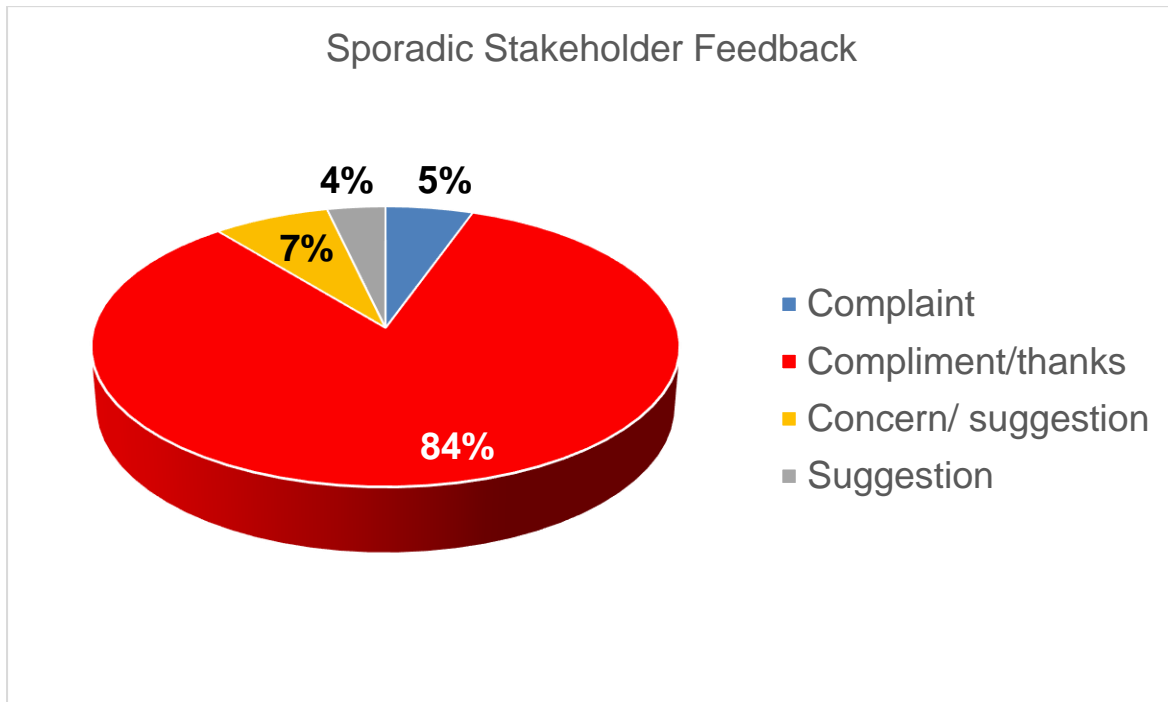


"While the majority of staff say 'Hello' and give their name, this is not always the case."

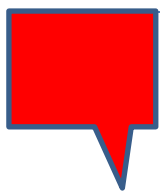
Quote taken from NESS Members' survey 2018

...but if we miss the spot, we try to put it right. We adhere to our complaints procedure and in addition, we follow up any traceable concerns or dissatisfaction expressed to respond and remedy, wherever possible. Our Complaints procedure and leaflets are available in all reception areas, in accessible formats and on our website.

In most feedback we receive, people compliment our approach, as this analysis of the unsolicited feedback we received shows:



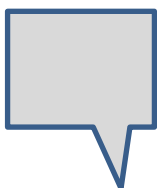
NESS' approach, encouraging innovation and flexibility in the team, means we often exceed expectations in equipping people to meet their own challenges.



“The real deal is to support people in achieving these outcomes for themselves.”

Quote taken from NESS Members' survey 2018

People with sensory loss are achieving a level of independence way beyond their initial expectations. When people first receive the devastating news that they are losing their sight, or when they realise they can no longer hear conversations or the television, their ambition and outlook on life is typically reduced. There are many examples of this in our feedback.



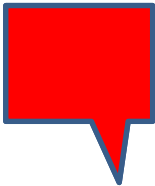
“Mrs R wanted to say thank you so much for your help in getting a phone she can actually hear. She said you were so lovely and helpful”

“Sporadic feedback” log, service user

“I write to thank you for the equipment provided. I can only say that it is excellent and makes the world of difference.”

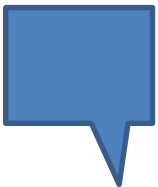
“Sporadic feedback” log, service user

NESS added value service provision varies from one area to another because of differences in local statutory contract arrangements and charitable funding sources, which are reflected in our premises, staffing and local infrastructure. Most are provided in Aberdeen, where we own the building and where the organisation has been based for nearly 140 years. This has not gone unnoticed by service users in Moray, Dundee and Angus, who also receive our NESS News.



“It would be very helpful if more was available in Moray as all seem to be Aberdeen based”

Quote taken from NESS Members' survey 2018



“I find your newsletter contains info more related to the North East area, but of very little interest to the Dundee area.”

“Most of your activities are held at locations too remote for me to attend. Even the rare local one is a trauchle at my age”

Quotes taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

Recognising this imbalance, we are taking action to address these where possible:

- ✓ The appointment of an additional fundraising co-ordinator for Dundee & Angus.
- ✓ Investment in volunteer recruitment in Angus has started to address some of these issues.
- ✓ Additional staff and volunteer resources in Dundee.
- ✓ A conscious effort to try and give equal NESS News coverage to Dundee, Angus and Moray.
- ✓ A review of NESS News content and reach.

- ✓ Efforts to try more 'local neighbourhood' activities in Angus and Moray, which are chiefly rural areas.

We received 8 complaints regarding four issues during this period:

- The organisation and catering at a coffee morning
- The specific conduct of a worker
- Use of personal data for mailings, details on page 52
- One incident of childrens' behaviour whilst at a club meeting at NESS premises

All were properly investigated under our complaints procedure and each complainant was informed of the outcome. Where appropriate we offered further explanation. We appreciate people may find it difficult to tell us when they aren't happy with something we've done, so we value their effort and aim to learn from all our feedback, positive and negative.

Outputs – services

These correspond to the “Frontline services we deliver” headings in the Outputs section on the Theory of change model on p20.

Practical and emotional support.....	41
Accessible information	48
Aids for Daily living.....	54
Help with technology and equipment	58
Added Value projects.....	60
Opportunities for people to meet.....	67

Practical and emotional support

Social work, Rehabilitation and Specialist support that NESS provides on behalf of local authorities

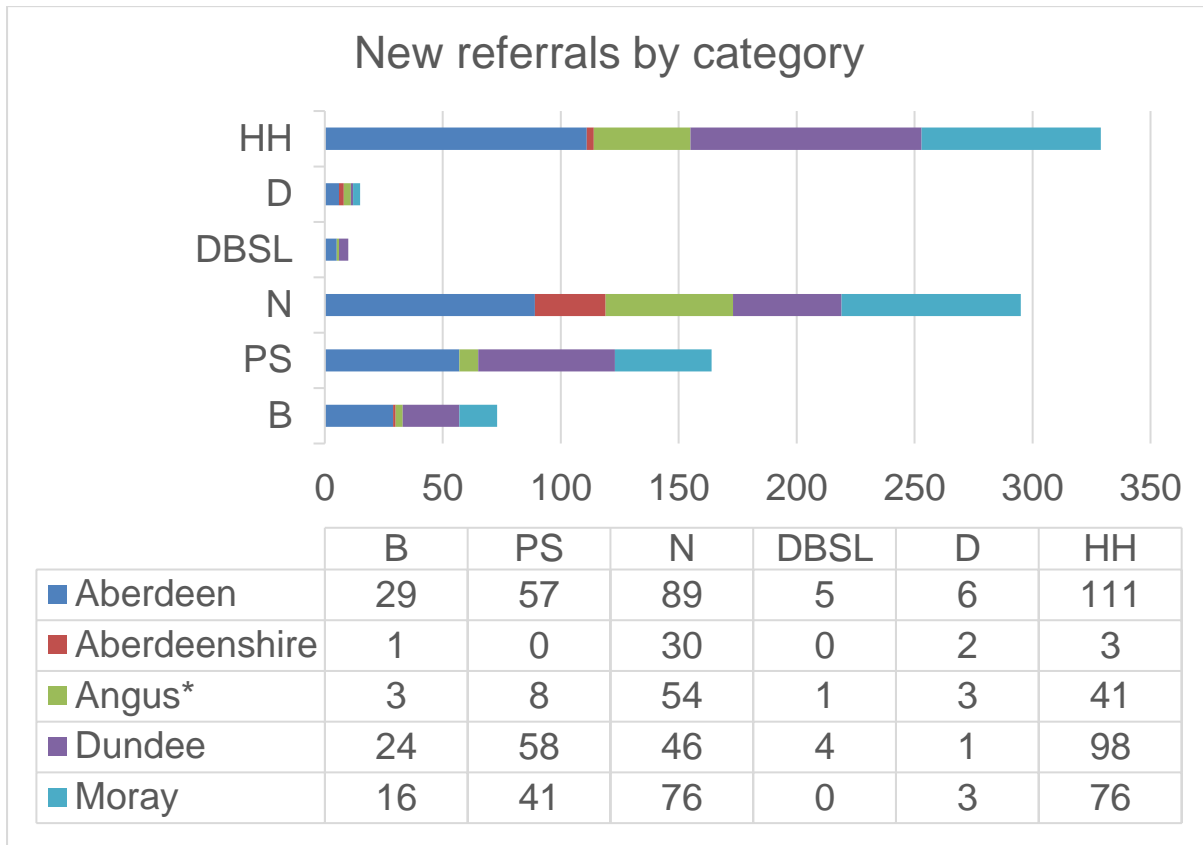


“NESS is an excellent service for the person and their families. Their social workers do an outstanding job.”

Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

People come to NESS from a wide variety of sources. In Aberdeen, Dundee and Moray we offer them a full Social Work assessment of need, which includes welfare benefit entitlements. The equipment we can provide is funded by the local authorities. There are differences between one area and another in terms of what may be issued. In areas where we have Resource centres, members of the public have direct access. This allows us to attract people who may otherwise not find out about us.

Our statutory funded services saw 850 new service users this year out of a total of 1,260 people that they supported.



Key to abbreviations on Page 13

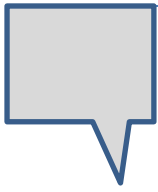
In Aberdeen, our Field work team saw **297** new service users and reopened **195** cases, making a total of **492** people supported. We carried out **284** assessments and **390** people with hearing loss received equipment to help them at home. **206** people called in to use our duty service.

In Angus, we saw **110** new referrals and reopened **93** cases, making a total of **203**. We carried out **165** assessments and **135** people with hearing loss and sight loss received aids and equipment to help them at home. **Seven** Angus residents visited their nearest duty drop-in service, which is in Dundee.

Our Dundee team saw **231** new service users and reopened **75** cases, making a total of **306** people supported. We carried out **252** assessments and **158** people received equipment or aids to help them cope at home with their vision or hearing loss. **124** people called into our Duty service.

In Moray we saw **212** new service users and **47** existing service users had their case reopened, adding up to **259**. We completed **144** assessments and **192** people with sight loss and with hearing loss

benefitted from equipment and aids we supplied. **60** people used the drop-in duty service in Elgin.



“I write in appreciation of the wonderful work done by your Sensory Services. Both my late husband and I have benefitted greatly from your support.”

“Sporadic feedback” log, Moray service user

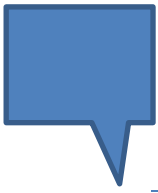
We also welcomed **36** Aberdeenshire residents to NESS in Aberdeen for information or support from our Added Value services, in addition to the **168** seen by our Hospital Information Service, see below, page 43.

Our current practice is to make contact via letter, immediately with service users once a referral has been received and visit within **14** working days of making contact, with a full social work Assessment of Need to be completed within **28** working days of the first contact.

We work to an individual care plan designed around the service user's intended personal outcomes. Once these are achieved the case is reviewed and closed. Once a service user's case is closed we continue to keep in touch with them by newsletter, so that they are able to get their case reopened swiftly should they need further help or support.

We estimate that over 95% of people who are referred, engage with us. There are, occasionally incorrect referrals when a worker finds that someone does not have sensory loss or has changed their mind since the referral was made. Most of these are found on the first visit, so the people would have had some input and information already. Everybody is offered some information and a listening ear, even if we cannot improve their lives greatly.

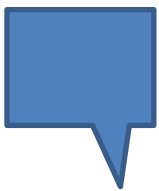
We are hopeful that, using our recently developed organisational outcomes framework, “**Living it my Way**”, reporting on outcomes in the future will be improved.



“The difference NESS has made to me is immense. They have taken the anxious feelings away”

Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

People with sight loss can be assessed for mobility aids and help at home, by our Rehabilitation workers, and will often undertake training to learn new routes and techniques. This includes, for example, adapting kitchen equipment and learning new techniques to cook safely,



“The staff have given me confidence by training me with my walking aids about town.”

Quote taken from Customer survey 2017

Welfare benefits support and advice

In addition to the core welfare benefits support and advice provided under our local authority Service Level Agreements, NESS delivers specialist welfare support through a dedicated adviser. People who have been in receipt of Disability Living Allowance are being transferred over to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and are required to be reassessed. People who cannot see or hear well often require additional support to understand what is happening and to challenge decisions. Our welfare adviser deals with all benefits, but people transferring over to PIP is the largest work stream. In this period a total of **49** individuals have been seen, often on several occasions, resulting in **261** contacts. Supplying specialist knowledge to the team, carrying out research, communicating with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), preparing for appeals and supporting service users to attend health assessments and tribunals is all part of this complex role. We have a high success rate of winning appeals. **During the last financial year, the Service Users we supported, who won their appeals and tribunal cases received a total of over £12,000 in back-payments.**

Hospital Information Service

Delivering information, advice and emotional support, often at the point of diagnosis, NESS' Hospital Information Officer (HIO) provides valuable input to patients with sight loss at the Eye Out Patients Department (EOPD).

The certification and registration process can be confusing to patients, at a time when they may be feeling emotionally overwhelmed and unsure about the options available to them. Our HIO provides early intervention support - someone to talk to who understands their eye condition and the impact it may have on their life. Someone who can support them with the registration process and help them access any other support they need. Someone who can translate clinical terminology into understandable terms, so the patient can begin to start making meaningful decisions about their future.

Our aim is to return control to the patient, so they can function independently.

Presenting cases at EOPD 1.4.17 – 31.3.18	Aberdeen	Aberdeenshire	Moray	Other	Total
New patient	105	134	22	5	266
Carers/Professionals	2	3	0	0	5
Follow ups	23	31	5	0	59
Total	130	168	27	5	330

Source: NESS report to RNIB who invest in this service

The Hospital Information service caters for patients with hearing loss via the Audiology Clinic. It tells them where they can access assessment, information and equipment to aid their everyday living and retain their independence.

It is crucial in ensuring patients' social, emotional and any additional care needs are not overlooked in clinical areas, and that accessible information and communication support are included as part of the priority patient need.

Integration - Bringing health and social care together

The service supports patients to navigate the complex health and social care system for a seamless transition between services. It can identify patients' needs in the clinical setting and refer them for social work assessment, mobility training, rehabilitation, equipment and other support in the community. By working between the rest of NESS and with other agencies, involving onward referral and signposting, the HIO connects partner agencies to find the best of outcomes for the patient.

Employment support

We deliver practical advice for blind and deaf jobseekers and in-work support including advice for employees and employers about adaptive equipment. We give advice for working people with sight or hearing loss or facing changes to their condition.

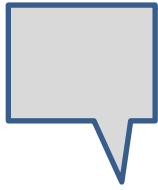
Performance indicator	Aberdeen	Dundee
Number of people engaged and registered with the service	59	21
Number of people moving into work	6	1
Number of people in work receiving support to retain work or look at alternative options	26	7
Number of people moving onto education and training	23	6
Number of people taking up work placement and volunteering opportunities	9	3

Source: NESS reports to The Fairer Aberdeen Fund for the Aberdeen service and the Robertson Trust, for the Dundee service.

Some people may engage with more than one aspect of this service and some fail to engage beyond initial the contact.

“Derek” is staying in employment due to the support he got here. He and his wife had been very worried he was going to lose his job after his condition changed suddenly. We arranged for Derek to get support and

advice when dealing with his employer and the occupational health assessments



“Just to let you know, Derek had to attend an offshore medical to return to work. He passed with no problems and no changes to his duties are required. We are really so relieved and over the moon. He is due back to work next Friday, so a big step for him. He’s looking forward to getting back to normality. We really have appreciated your help and knowing we had you on our side made such a difference too.”

“Sporadic feedback” log- wife of service user using
Employment service

We can help people obtain volunteering opportunities and work placements as they move nearer to their employment goal. “Naomi”, a young Deaf woman, started coming to NESS for support to look at College options. As a single parent, she also needed help to research and visit local nurseries to try to get suitable childcare arranged. She needed encouragement and support to organise her appointments and complete application forms, as she lacked confidence in her own abilities. Naomi started on a Business Administration course last August and worked hard to pass her first year’s assessments. She was supported to look for part-time work to supplement her studies and we assisted her to devise a CV and cover letter. She was successful in securing work first at the Christmas Village and later at weekends with Sainsbury’s local supermarket. Following this, with our support, she secured a work placement for her Business Admin course with a local charity. She has been loaned an amplifier from NESS to use for her telephone duties. Naomi was absolutely thrilled to be given her “own” desk; and has said that she may go on to volunteer for this organisation once her placement comes to an end – because she enjoys it so much.

“I’m very happy I got this opportunity. My family and close friends are very excited for me too...It’s a great start for my future and helps with my studies too. Just the idea of having my own desk in an office- makes me want to burst with excitement. Thanks for all your help, I really appreciate it.”

“Naomi



Accessible information

Lipreading classes

NESS has been delivering programmes of lip-reading classes for people who are deaf and hard of hearing in Aberdeen and in Elgin throughout this period. We also had a class in Inverurie, but it concluded in July 2017.

If you are deaf, being able to understand what a speaker is saying to you, not only improves your independence, but has a marked effect on your confidence, self-esteem, and social functioning.



“I concentrate more on peoples’ faces when in conversation. I am happier to say to people that I am deaf, causing them to try harder!”

- Lipreading participant evaluation

Sharing similar experiences with others who are sympathetic and gaining advice and tips, builds resilience and self-sufficiency in dealing with communication barriers and the confidence to promote change in the behaviour of others. The classes are designed to produce confident attendees with well-developed strategies for reducing communication barriers.



“When at home I remove hearing aids and use subtitles - try to follow lip reading on TV news”

- Lipreading participant evaluation

Four groups ran in Aberdeen, each with **21** sessions throughout the year and an average of **nine** class members in each. There were **two** groups in Elgin, each with **seven** participants, also undertaking **21** sessions.



“As well as lipreading, it has been useful to find out about available aids. Also, I am more confident about telling people to repeat as I didn’t hear first time.”

- Lipreading participant evaluation

BSL Interpreting Service

NESS provides a British Sign Language to English Language interpreter booking service, to enable Deaf British Sign Language users and hearing English speakers to communicate with each other. We employ a SASLI⁷ registered BSL interpreter and also use freelance registered interpreters for the assignments we book. This service is charged to the customer making the booking.

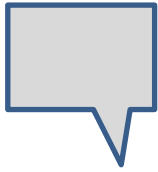


“New interpreter from NESS he was fantastically BSL sign. I am very pleased of him. WELL DONE”- BSL user

NESS undertook **493** assignments during this period with our in-house interpreter fulfilling **273** of them, and **220** being undertaken by freelancers. **99** of these assignments were NESS jobs and **394** were

⁷ The Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters- SASLI is the voluntary regulatory body for language and communication professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland.

external customers, chiefly Council officers, Doctors, both GPs and in hospitals and Colleges or Universities, supporting Deaf students with lectures and seminars, as well as signing to conference audiences. Jobs were spread through each of the local authority areas we operate in.



“I wanted to say a huge thank you to the interpreter booking team at NESS. I had a request for help from a family where there was a short notice funeral and they were upset that they were unable to access an interpreter locally for a member of the family. Your team solved the problem and the family are very happy with the outcome.”

Sporadic feedback log DVA Engagement Officer, Dundee

We designed a customer feedback system for the interpreting service and began collecting feedback on the delivery right at the end of this social accounting period. Following an assignment, both the customer and the service users is handed a postage-paid folding postcard asking:

- Was the interpreter on time?
- Were you able to fully communicate today?
- Would you use this interpreter again?
- Overall how would you rate the service?

So far, the return rate is higher than 70% and feedback has been positive. However, there is insufficient data to make a valid report at this time.

Information

People living with a sensory loss come from all walks of life and access information in lots of different ways depending on when they lost their sight or their hearing, how much sight or hearing they still have, and what their language preferences are, e.g. sign language or spoken language. Everyone with a sensory loss is unique and has their preferred way of accessing information. This may change depending on the circumstances and the environment.

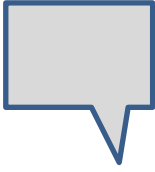
When producing information, society usually assumes that people can see visual information and hear audio information, however this is not the case if you have a sensory loss. Because of this assumption, communication can be a significant barrier to anyone who has a sight and/or hearing loss. However, NESS has developed effective ways of working, and services, to make communication easier.

NESS routinely produces our information in a range of formats so that anyone who has a sensory loss will be able to access it. Each service user has their preferred format entered on their record and all information will be sent out in this format. Every time we send out NESS News we remind people they can change their preferred format for information. Information can be produced in large print, in audio or BSL on DVD, or in Braille. Our digital recordings are available on USB flash drives, CDs or DVDs.

NESS also regularly produces other organisations' information in alternative formats, so they can communicate with their customers or clients who have sensory loss. This also effectively raises the profile of people with sensory loss in the communities we reach. Our Transcription Service is a chargeable service and NESS has many repeat customers from council housing departments to theatres and churches, each potentially seeking documents in Braille; read out and digitally recorded in audio format; or transcribed into BSL, signed and filmed to camera and produced on DVD in our digital recording studio. Our prices are competitive and cover our production costs. We also publicise the **Contact Scotland BSL** Video relay service, which makes contacting services much easier for Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users who are unable to use the telephone. Making all these things more accessible contributes to enabling people with sensory loss to better integrate into their communities.

NESS News

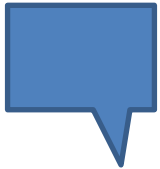
Currently quarterly, our newsletter contains contact details, local and national notices, information about new services and newly available pieces of equipment, fundraising news and any changes affecting people who are eligible to use NESS services.



“I am grateful to be on your mailing list to receive your termly newsletter from NESS and would congratulate you and your colleagues for the information and quality of your publication and evident spirit with which it is published.” --
“Sporadic feedback” log

We stay in touch

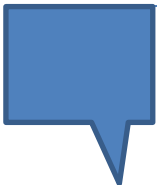
NESS News is sent out to everyone on our mailing list. It is our main method of staying in touch with people who might not have seen us for a while, but who may wish to use our support in the future.



“Up until now I haven't felt it necessary to use all the facilities offered, but I know if I need help, of any sort, in the future, I can contact NESS”

Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

We are there when needed



“NESS is there for me if and when I need it.”

“Help available when we require it”

Quotes taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

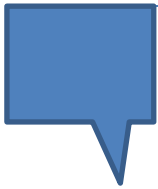
As is our usual practice, we included two books of our Christmas Charity Raffle tickets in with our winter edition of NESS News. This year, it sparked criticism from four people in Dundee and Angus, including the chair of another sensory charity and an elected representative, who were unhappy with what we had done. The circumstances were investigated and the four individuals raising the concerns were responded to individually by senior NESS representatives. The case had also been reported to the Information Commissioner's Office, who investigated and concluded that NESS had acted properly and not misused anyone's personal data. All feedback is valuable, so we were

grateful to the people raising their concerns and to the Information Commissioner's Office for reviewing our actions and giving us a clean bill of health in this respect. As the new GDPR rules come into force we will review our processes accordingly.

Aids for Daily living

- We issue equipment to people free of charge according to the rules in place in each local authority, which differ. Our resource centres stock and can advise on equipment to purchase.
- We are agents for the British Wireless for the Blind charity, which supplies radio and audio equipment to Blind and vision impaired people.
- We work in partnership with Scottish War Blinded, who provide outreach support and can also provide audio equipment and technology to their members, who are vision impaired former armed services personnel.

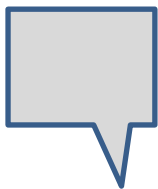
Equipment for people with a sight loss



“The range of services, products, supports and information are first class”

Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

We provide information and advice in each of our three resource centres, where we display useful specialist equipment and daily living aids, to help people stay independent in their everyday activities. Telling the time, working in the kitchen, taking medication and using the telephone or remote control can all become more difficult with a sight loss. We have a range of daily living aids that can help e.g. talking clocks and watches, tactile markers, large button telephones and many others.

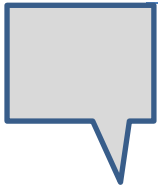


“It’s great there is a place like this where you can try out all this equipment”-

“Sporadic feedback” log, service user

Equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

We also have a range of equipment for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing to assist with everyday living. We can demonstrate and provide training on devices to help at home such as flashing doorbells, loop systems for hearing the TV and vibrating alarms.



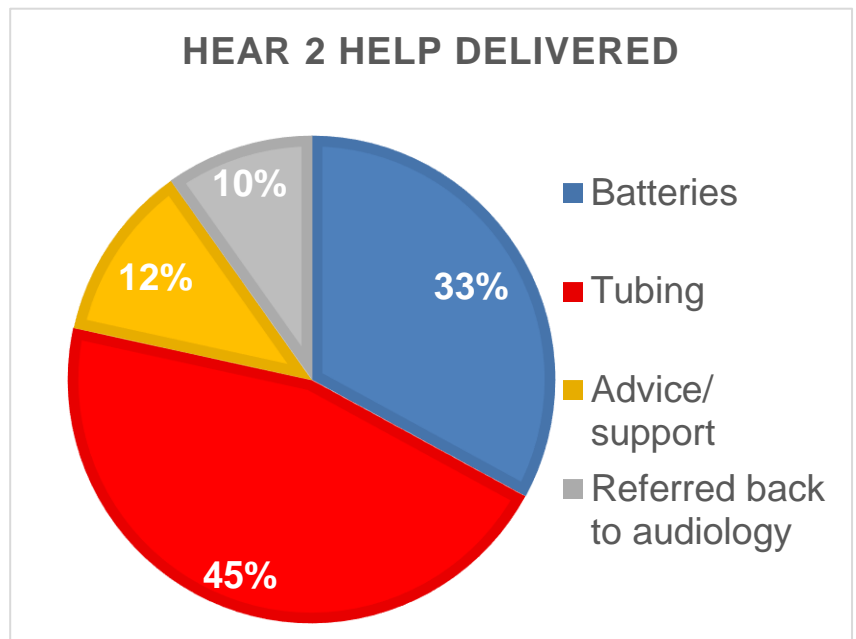
“I used my new loop system last night. It’s fantastic! I can honestly say it’s made a real difference to me. We can now have the tv on a much lower setting. “

“Sporadic feedback” log, service user

Hear 2 Help

For those who wear an NHS hearing aid, in partnership with NHS Grampian’s audiology department we offer help with changing batteries, new tubing, cleaning and maintenance as well as advice and support from our trained volunteers, many of whom are hearing aids users themselves. This helps people to get the best performance from their hearing aids and hear more clearly.

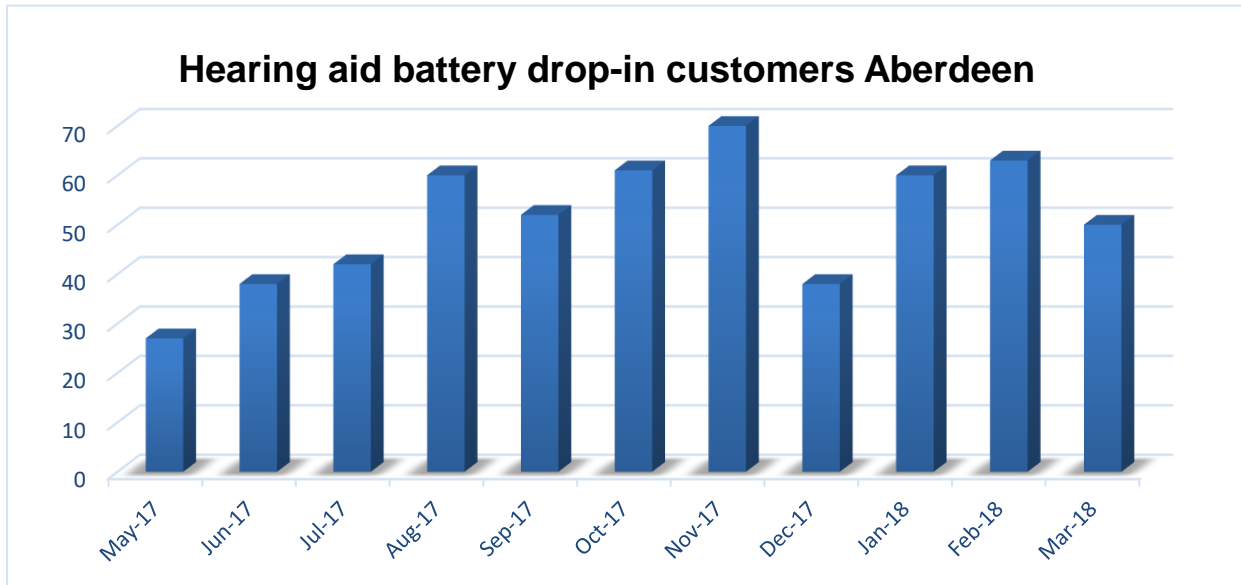
Hearing aids users made 148 visits to our Hear 2 help drop-in clinics in Aberdeen. Data was collected by our volunteers at the drop-ins. This pie chart shows the kind of thing we were able to help with.



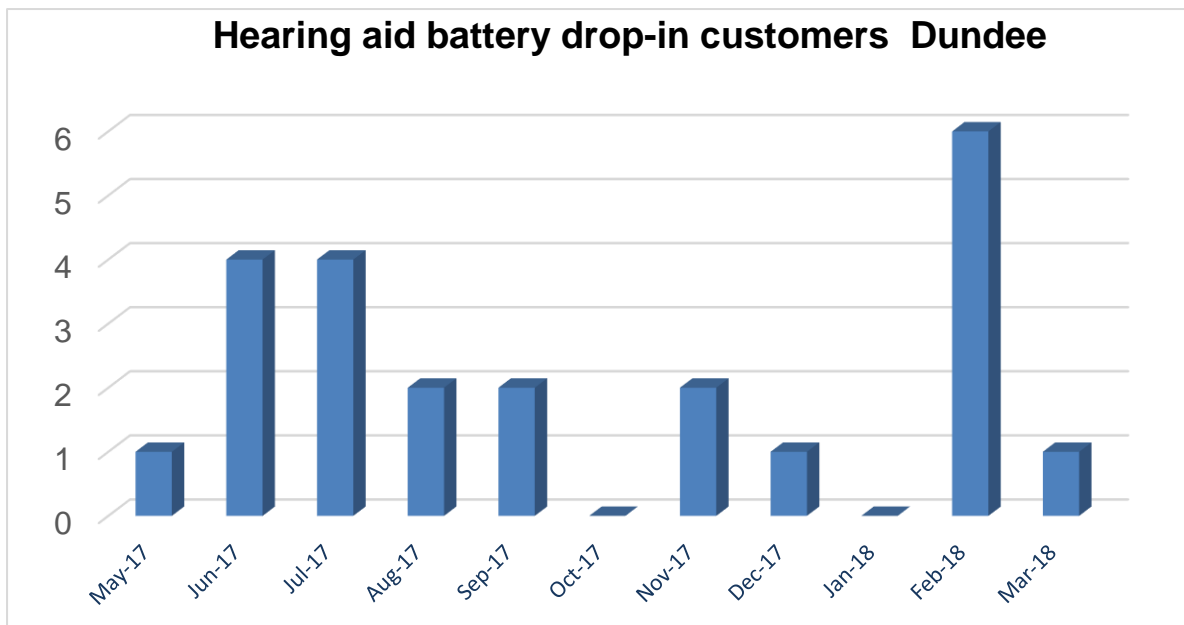
Hearing aid batteries

In collaboration with audiology departments at NHS Grampian and NHS Tayside, we have also started distributing hearing aid batteries to

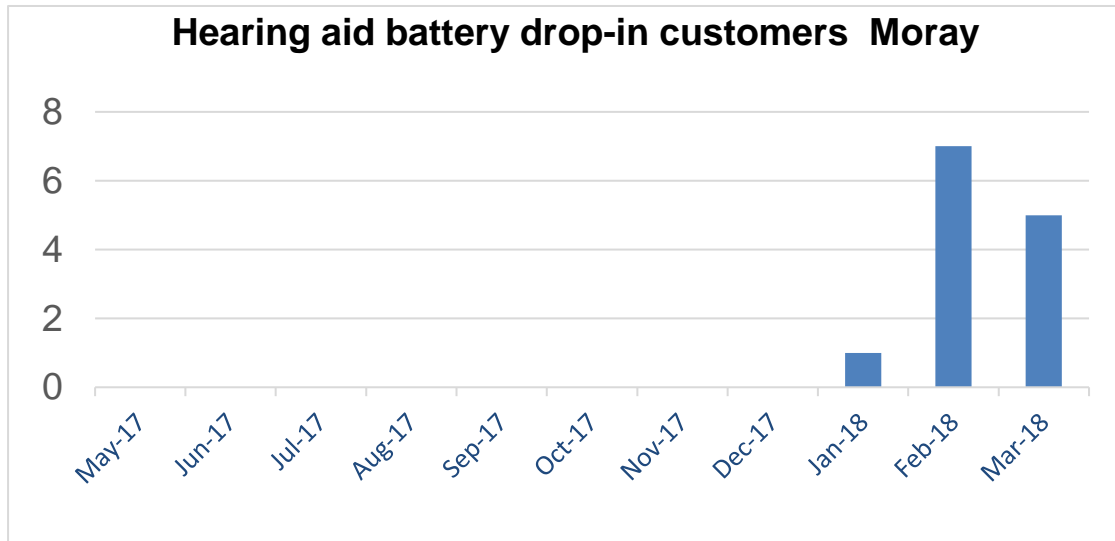
wearers from each of our three resource centres when they drop in. The following data in this section is compiled by our busy Receptionists:



Credit for this goes to a service user in Dundee, who first came up with this idea to us. We have been distributing them for over a year now. People are getting to know they can come to us for new batteries and they can find out about other support and equipment when they visit.



We only started supplying batteries in Moray in January 2018.



“It's very good to know that I can now get my hearing aid batteries at NESS”

Quote from NESS Members' survey 2018

Help with technology and equipment

ICT for All

Originating in a project that introduced blind and partially sighted people to specialist equipment and technology to help them make the most of their remaining vision and maximise independence, **ICT for All** now spends increasingly more time equipping people with different types of sensory loss to use the accessibility features on their generic smart devices. This means they get to solve their own problems and interact independently with the world through digital and online communications. Supported by SCVO's Digital Charter Fund, we have maintained our relevance and extended our reach because we have been able to adapt as technology races onwards.

This service is well established in Aberdeen three days a week and in Moray for one day. Our newly opened Dundee base has quickly become busy one day a week, as service users come to try out what is available. People can access this service from across the whole of the North East.

People using this service by local authority area

Aberdeen city	Aberdeen-shire	Moray	Dundee	Angus	other
85	23	19	34	17	2

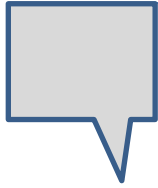
Source: NESS report to the Robertson Trust

This year **180** people were referred or referred themselves. We completed **115** assessments for equipment and delivered **105** specialist sessions. There were **76** group sessions delivered and **24** home visits completed, resulting in people using specialist or mainstream technology at home. Several people accessed multiple activities in the service.

“Your IT guy knew so much about many different kinds of apps. He gave my daughter the confidence to explore with them”

“Sporadic feedback” log – Mum of a young service user

Support for children and young people



Thank you, NESS for all you have done for my beautiful grand-daughter. She has made so many friends and enjoys everything she does with you”

“Sporadic feedback” log from a Granny

Mobility training by our Rehabilitation workers

During this period, we have worked specifically with **12** vision impaired children in Aberdeen and in Moray. Each had an individual programme aimed at building their confidence and skills for independent travel and to improve their mobility around school and in the community generally. We have carried out **two** school audits looking at safety and learning needs for **two** children about to start nursery and school. We have worked in depth with foster carers and social workers on a consultative basis, providing information and advice about specific needs. We have worked with teaching staff to help with a child who has serious sensory loss in addition to other complex needs. We have also worked with several Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) teaching sighted guiding techniques.

Added Value projects

YPSS

“The Moray Council Sensory Education Service has a social group which meets once a month to allow hearing and visually impaired pupils to come together to socialise and play games, these are all primary school age pupils who are often the only deaf or VI pupil in their school.

There is a long history of NESS involvement in these sessions. This involvement is always much valued and appreciated, they are now integral part of the social group team.

In my opinion, this represents a good example of integrated working between yourselves and the Council.....long may it continue!”

“Sporadic feedback” log from the acting head of sensory education in Moray

Our Young People’s Sensory Service (YPSS) aims to support young people, 0 -18, who have a sensory loss, and their families, to get the most out of life. This includes those who are registered blind, partially sighted, non-registered vision impaired, those who are profoundly Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or indeed, Deafblind. Their sensory loss means many of them are struggling to learn to do the same things for themselves as other young people are able to do.

Children and young people reached in this period:

Aged	Aberdeen	Aberdeen-shire	Moray	Total engaged	In touch with
0 - 4	2	0	0	2	17
5 - 9	15	3	3	21	45
10 -15	15	5	13	33	77
16 - 18	3	2	2	7	33

Totals	35	10	18	63	172
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Source: NESS report to the Bank of Scotland Foundation, who invested in YPSS

As with NESS as a whole, **we are in touch with many more people than those who are currently engaged with us**, supplying them with information about what is available to them. We offer an activities timetable that runs during out-of-school hours and is intense during school holidays. We also offer individual support that they can choose to engage with, including via social media.

Fun activities, social groups and trips help youngsters make friends and gain new experiences – at the same time as developing important life skills. They learn social skills and form lasting relationships with the outcome being that their confidence grows and result in better inclusion, increased resilience and independence. If these issues are not specifically addressed, these children can become accustomed to being left out, growing up with limited ambition, and expectations to perform at a lower level than their peers.



“Thank you for a fun day yesterday, the girls had fun.”

“Another fab activity enjoyed by all”.

“Had an ace time at Camperdown park.”

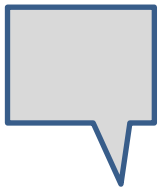
“Great to see the kids enjoying the horse riding”.

“So pleased C. went on the horse, thank you for encouraging him.”

“Thank you for the cinema trip, enjoyed by all.”

Text messages from parents of YPSS service users

YPSS hosts activities and youth groups at NESS' bases in Aberdeen and Elgin; we also use other venues for specific functions like the Elgin Youth Café as well as taking young people to all kinds of community facilities and venues. We have links with the sensory education bases at three local authorities and take part in collective activities wherever possible. We also support young people in their home neighbourhoods, helping them become familiar with taking public transport, learning the route to college, for example, and how to find their way safely to and from other places in the community.



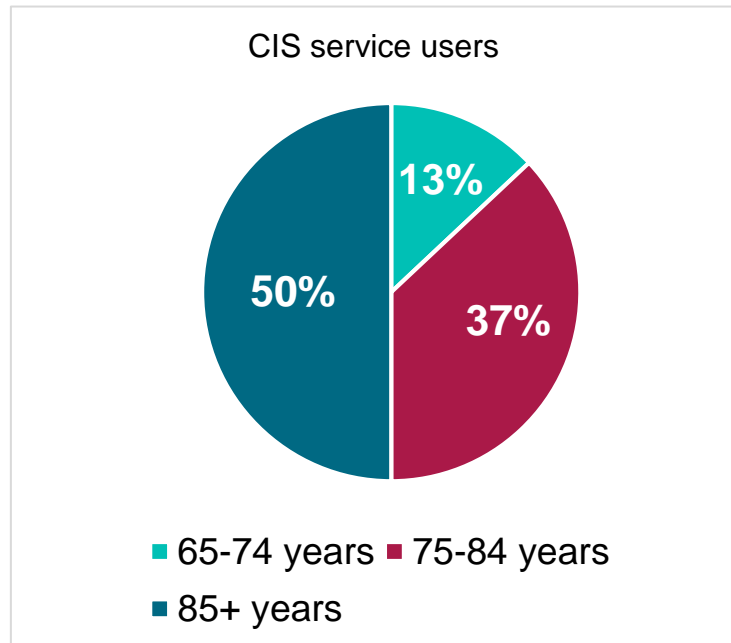
“Coming to the YPSS has not only boosted my confidence to speak to people but it also gives me the opportunity to make friends and speak to people who have the same sensory loss as me. It's a great feeling and I'm really grateful for the group.”

“Testimony- A YPSS youngster.”

We encourage activities where youngsters and parents can meet with peers in similar circumstances and learn from each other. We also hold larger activities in the holidays where siblings and the whole family can come along and gain from the peer support elements available while having fun.

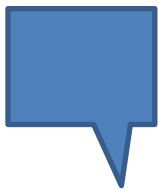
Support for older people

As 72% of our service users are 65+ with 59% being over 74, it would be correct to state that most of our activity is aimed at older people. Specifically, though, we have one added value project which is specially for those who are older and socially isolated. Although they are all over 64, **half of this group are 85+**, as this diagram shows:



Connect, Inform, Support (CIS)

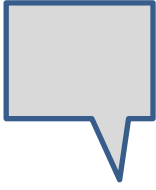
Support is offered to enable isolated older people living with sensory impairments to become more involved in their local community and maintain their social contacts. This is done through the organisation of social and leisure activities to help to build peer support circles, company and friendship. Its impact is highly valued.



“NESS has been wonderful. I felt so isolated ‘til you helped”

Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017

The main focus of the project is in providing support through groups, connections to social activities outside NESS, and through information, practical support and signposting to specialist services. The project delivers five regular groups in Aberdeen (three on a weekly basis and two fortnightly and five in Moray (one weekly and three fortnightly), and service users can pick and choose which groups they attend. More details are available at ANNEX F.



“She cannot believe the difference that one afternoon per week, has made to her mum. It has lifted her depression and given her something to look forward to, and she can’t thank everyone enough.”

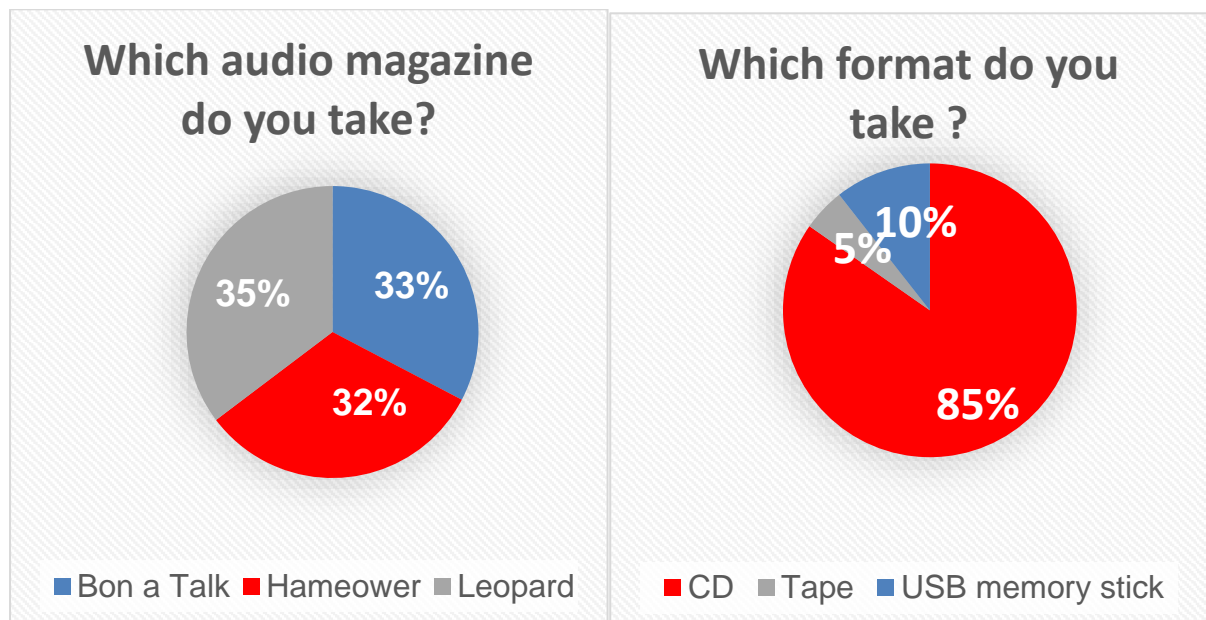
“Sporadic feedback” log

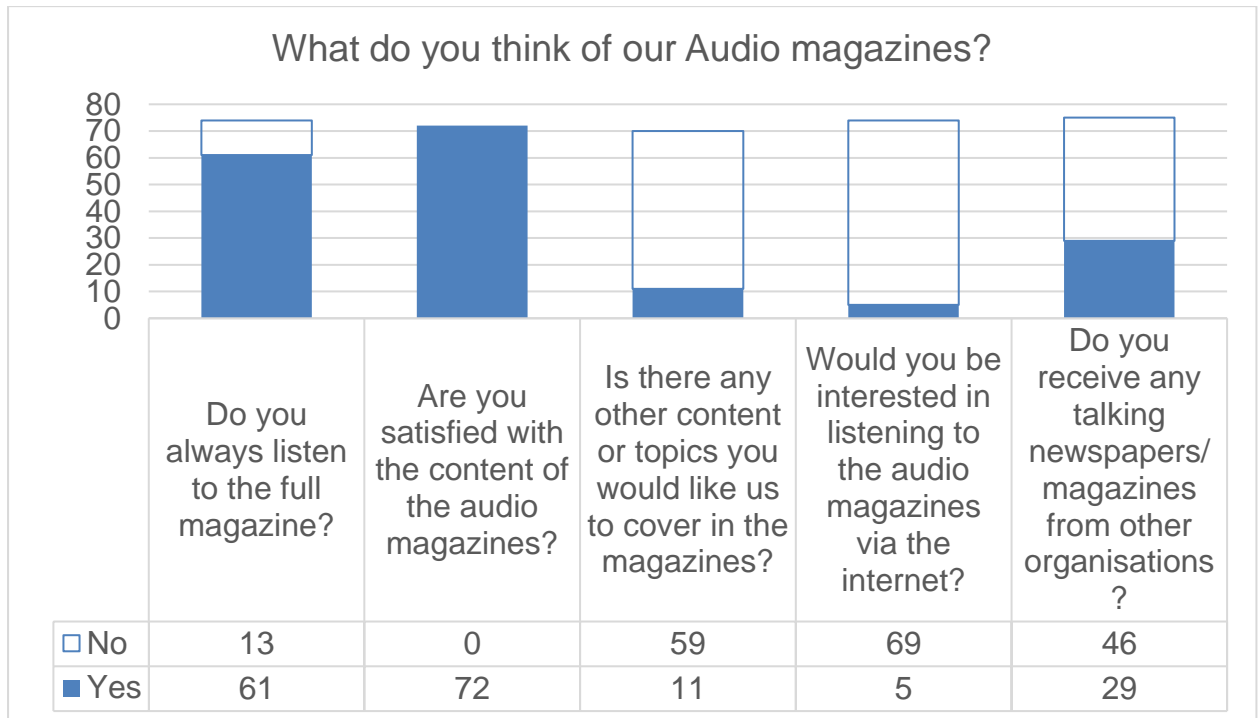
Audio magazines

We produce three publications from our digital recording studio in Aberdeen for people who cannot see to read:

- “Bon-A-Talk’ – the NESS monthly magazine featuring interviews, information and updates on events.
- 'The Leopard' goes out monthly and features articles from the print edition of Leopard Magazine about people, places and culture of the North East.
- “Hameower' is our fortnightly audio round-up of articles from the Press & Journal newspaper.

All 200 subscribers to NESS Audio magazines were surveyed in August 2017. 85 people responded, some being multiple users.





Twelve individual's suggestions:

- Poetry CDs
- More Leopard articles
- Items of local interest - fishing, farming news
- Readers' letters (Leopard)
- Current affairs
- More RNIB information on the technology products that are available - especially with details about the type and level of accessibility features
- Description of new bus routes and permanent changes to bus routes
- Hameower issued weekly
- P&J letters
- Sport & Aberdeen FC news. A garden magazine.
- Book reviews
- Future events

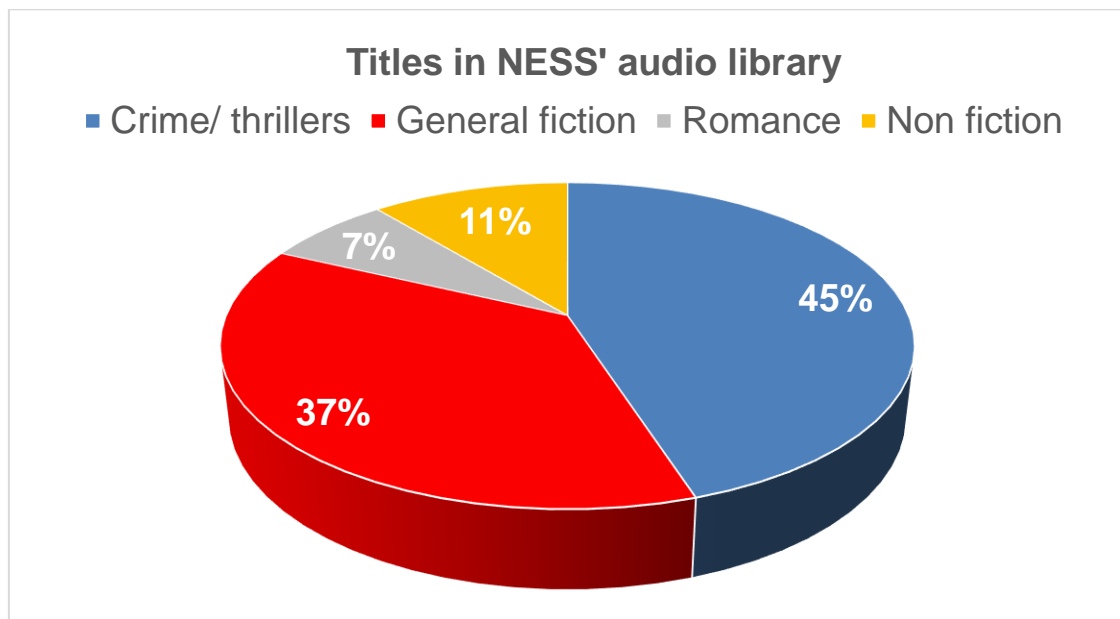
All have been noted and are being considered for future issues.

We have also begun to routinely advise service users about other local audio magazines serving our region. **As is the case with any other service, NESS does not intend to duplicate what is already being ably provided by others.**

For the time being we will continue to issue our magazines in physical formats, as opposed to downloading or streaming, as reflected in preference of subscribers in the survey. We are trying to encourage more people to choose reusable USB format if they can, as it is better for the environment.

Audio library

For a one off joining fee, library members have access to a wide range of audio books. They can drop in to the “HELLO” centre in John Street, the audio library at Elizabeth House or use our postal service accessed by email or telephone. Books are available on CD. At the end of this period we had 229 members and 5,324 book titles to choose from in the following categories:



Opportunities for people to meet

Positive outcomes frequently happen where people meet. NESS provides the opportunity for people to encounter one another and gives them information and support at a time that is right for them. An independent evaluation report recently observed:

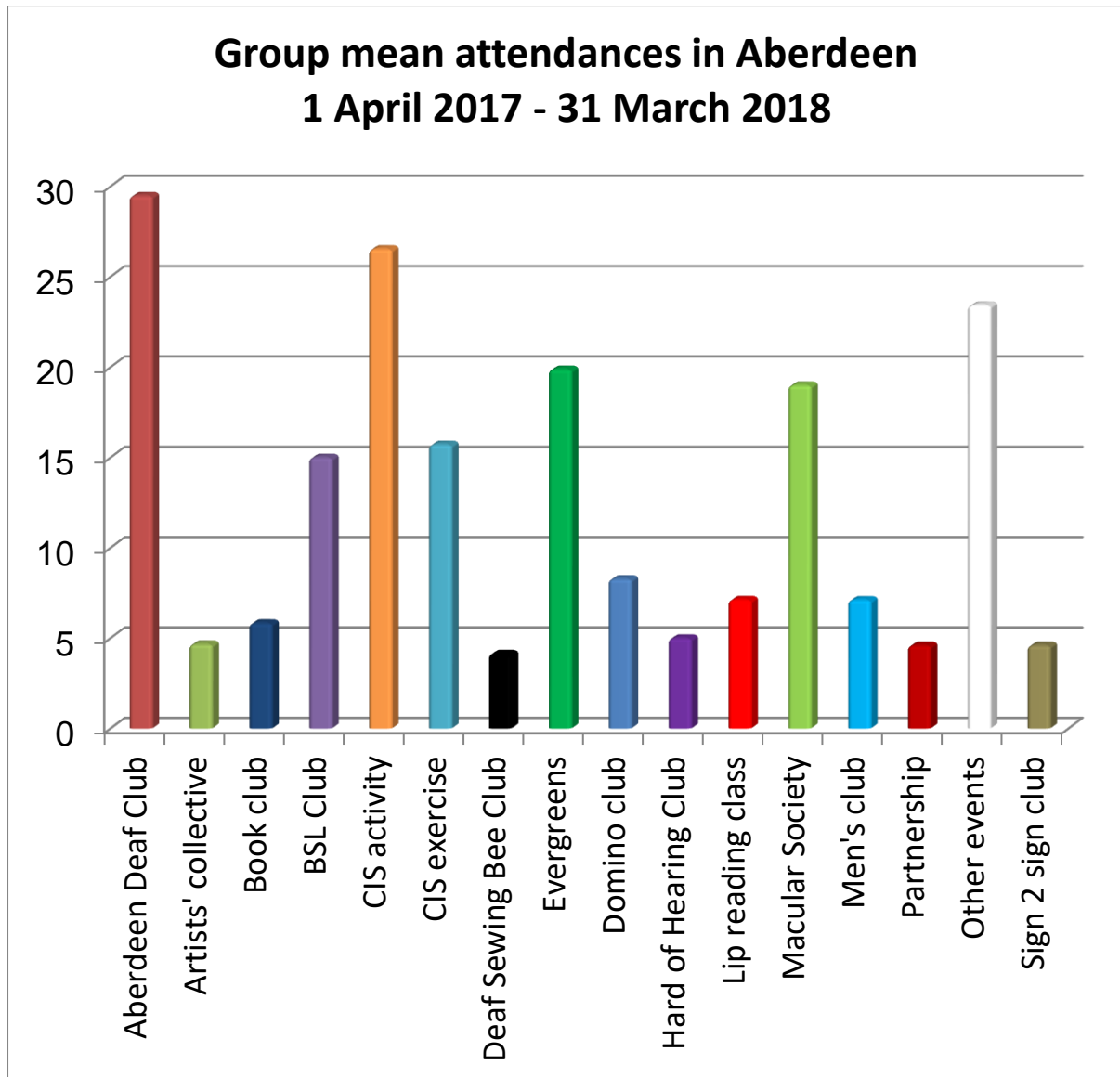
“Service users gained comfort from sharing personal challenges, discussing practical solutions to these, and gained encouragement from each other’s response to adversity.”

Blake Stevenson- Evaluation of CIS Project- Final report

Our café and facilities like the fitness suite at John Street provide opportunities for people to meet up in addition to the more formal groups and clubs.

Most of the groups we host are Aberdeen-based, where NESS owns the premises. **We would wish to extend a similar kind of provision into our other areas as circumstances allow.**

The list of clubs and groups that are supported by NESS, or that use NESS facilities, is long and varied. They have differing degrees of independence. Some groups are NESS groups, embedded in particular services, like the CIS chair-based exercise class that takes place at John Street every week. It is open only to CIS service users, delivered with CIS resources, and supported by NESS volunteers. Others, like Aberdeen Deaf Club, which also takes place at John Street every week, meets outside office hours, is independently managed by its members, who may or may not be known to NESS as service users.



Source: Attendance figures supplied by the groups themselves and NESS Receptionists

NESS is happy to publicise information about local peer support and activity groups and clubs for people with sensory loss in our region, through our website and social media, although we do not normally advertise the services of other organisations.

Informal encounters

People come into our resource centres for all kinds of reasons and not always to access a service or see our staff. Frequently, mostly in Aberdeen, people come in to use the facilities, for lunch or a coffee, to meet their friends and to make acquaintance with new folk.



“Since attending lipreading sessions at NESS I have become much more aware, not only of how people manage their disabilities, but also of how much they can achieve.”

Quote taken from Customer survey 2017 responses

Service user forum



Our website states, “NESS' Service User Forum is open to all NESS service users and is an opportunity to feed back, discuss issues, explore possible solutions and exchange views. You will also find out what's going on at NESS as well as locally and further afield. There are separate meetings in Aberdeen, in Dundee and in Elgin for Moray residents.”

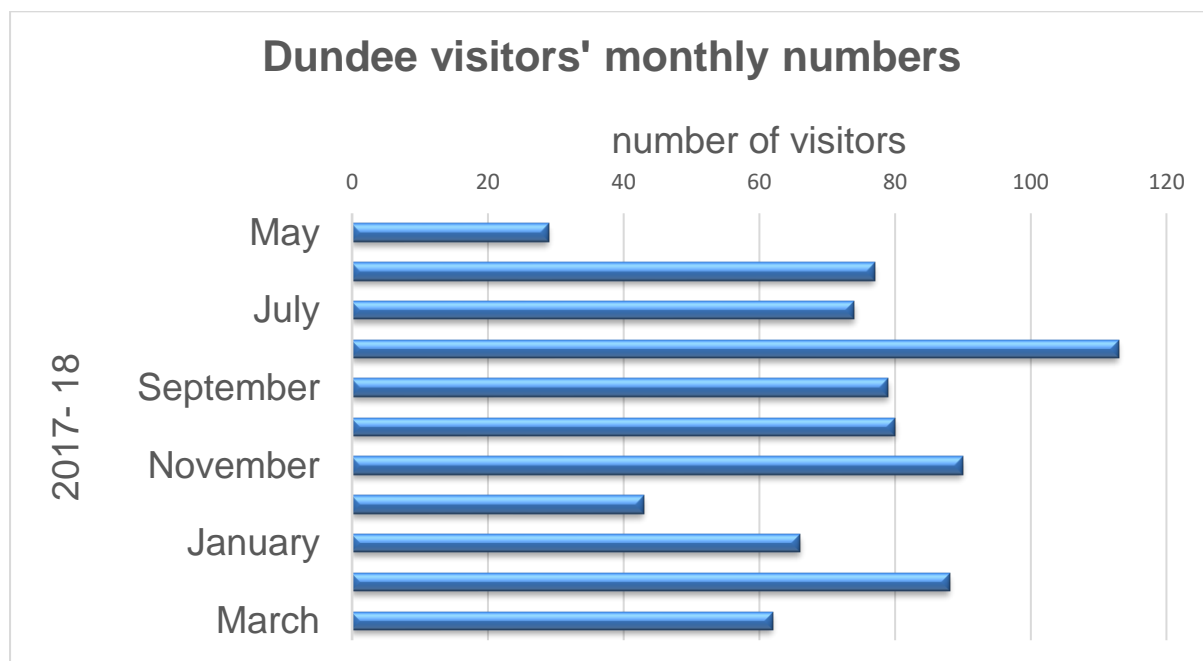
Six bi-monthly service user forum open meetings were held in Aberdeen and Elgin and chaired by one of the Directors, who is a service user representative. In Aberdeen, these have attracted **between nine and 16** participants. Each meeting included people with hearing loss, Deaf BSL users and people with sight loss. The Elgin meeting for people in Moray has attracted a smaller audience of **between 3 and 8**, but again is representative of people with hearing loss, some Deaf BSL users and people with sight loss. A new forum meeting was held in Dundee in March at the end of this period. **Six service users:** a mix of vision impaired, hard of hearing, deafblind and Deaf BSL users attended. A BSL to English language interpreter is routinely available at each of the three venues for these meetings, to help ensure accessibility for BSL users.

Additionally, the Forum gives service users direct access to the Chief Executive, who has attended ten of the twelve meetings in Aberdeen and Elgin as well as the meeting in Dundee. Issues important to those

in attendance at all the meetings frequently include access to public transport, mobility and road safety, urban mobility including shopping centre/theatre access, as well as developing increased opportunities to meet/socialise.

Visitors

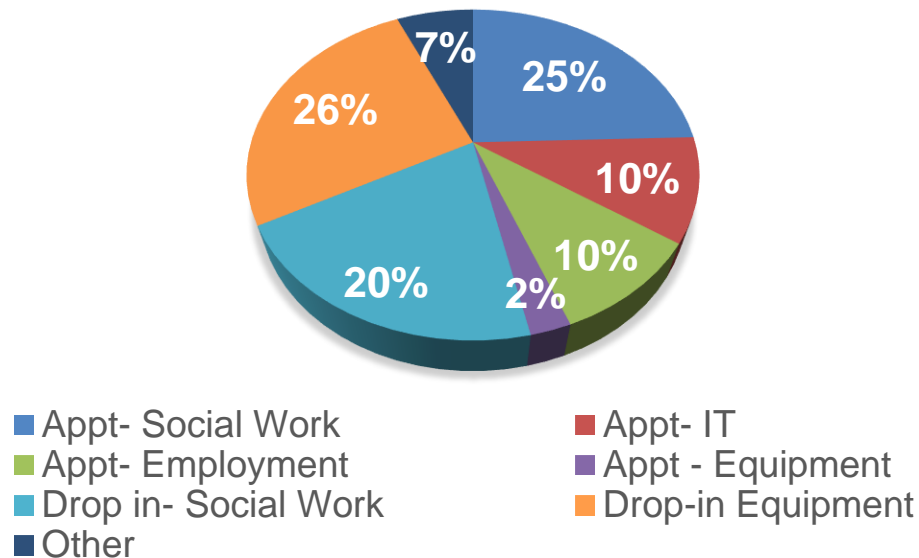
Our three resource centres are open for public access Monday to Friday. Our Dundee resource centre, open since October 2016, has been logging visits from the public since May 2017.



Dundee data logged by NESS Receptionists

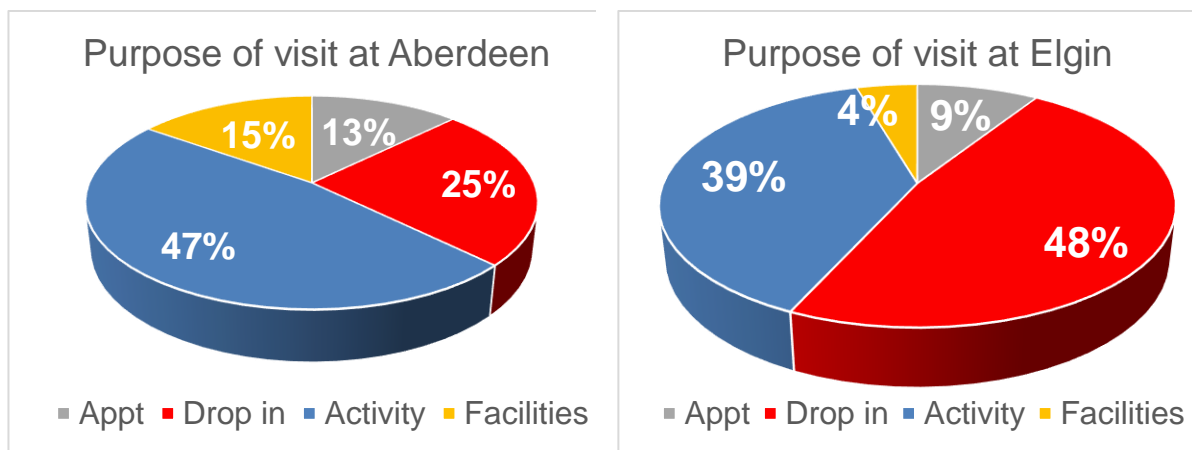
Services are available by appointment and by drop-in for the duty service (specified hours) or to access information and equipment. The total visits for these eleven months was **801**. Their main reason to visit has been recorded as their primary destination, with social work appointments, drop-ins for the duty services and drop-ins for equipment making up the majority.

Dundee visitors' primary destination 2017- 18



We have yet to develop activities, groups or leisure facilities in Dundee.

Our resource centres in Elgin and Aberdeen, where we do offer these, are well established. We simultaneously carried out a footfall study and consultation on selected sample weekdays to calculate the levels of footfall and to see what people are using NESS for in these visits.



We had 11,700 visits to our centre in Aberdeen, 2,100 to Elgin in this period.

The activities and facilities at each centre differ with significantly more available in Aberdeen. A full analysis including some other factors: gender, age group and sensory category is available at Appendix 8

During the footfall study consultation, we centrally logged people remotely accessing NESS.

Annual (estimate based on the footfall weekdays)					
Emails	Facebook reach*	NESS FB posts	Phone calls	Texts from Deaf people	Unique website hits
8,736	170,160	480	13,536	384	16,272

*Facebook define 'reach' as the number of unique people who saw our content

In this year we had 16,272 unique website hits and our Facebook reach was 170,160.

Sensory Awareness Training

As part of the training and information function, **NESS has delivered or contributed to 56 training or information events, reaching 1,223 people.**

Funding to training is structured as follows.

Most training and awareness raising activities taking place in Aberdeen City are funded by the Aberdeen See Hear Strategy Fund.

NESS's training programme is being promoted to Moray Council staff and Health and Social Care staff with the cost of their attendance being covered in the SLA with Health and Social Care Moray. Anyone not employed by the Partnership needs to pay to attend this training.

We are also starting to deliver our sensory awareness training programme in Dundee City, where places need to be paid.

NESS has been commissioned to deliver 4 sensory awareness training sessions across Angus every year and is working with Angus Health & Social Care Partnership to find the best way of delivering these sessions.

Sensory Awareness Training programme

NESS runs a programme of one day Sensory Awareness Training delivered in our Resource Centres in Aberdeen, Elgin and Dundee. The following have been delivered in the period:

6 in Aberdeen	46 participants
3 in Dundee	24 participants
2 in Elgin	14 participants
3 in Angus	29 participants
14 events	113 participants

Tailored training

Tailored training sessions are delivered to one organisation at a time and place to suit them, with the content adapted to meet their particular needs. We delivered **22** sessions and reached over **400** people.

Dementia and Sensory Loss sessions

This is an Aberdeen See Hear initiative aimed at encouraging care homes and others who might not typically attend out sensory awareness training, to engage. It is delivered in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland

to raise awareness of the co-occurrence of dementia and sensory loss and the impact this might have on someone. We delivered **3** Dementia and Sensory Loss sessions, reaching **26** people.

Information events

NESS has participated in **9** information events, **1** in Dundee, **1** in Elgin and **6** in Aberdeen, and **1** at a national conference in Glasgow, reaching approximately **420** people.

Talks to community groups

Typically, informal talks about NESS services that aim to raise awareness of the service that NESS provides as well as the needs of people living with a sensory loss. We delivered talks to **7** different community groups, reaching approximately **286** people.

Providing information

This has included working with other NESS staff and local HE/FE colleges to put together their BSL plans, consulting with Aberdeen Art Gallery on making their new exhibits accessible and advising Aberdeen Airport about making the information on their website more accessible.

Evaluation of training

Training is evaluated in a number of different ways depending on the audience and how long the training lasts.

Evaluating the long-term impact of training

A random sample of participants are contacted at the end of every month with a participants' survey of **4** questions in the form of a surveymonkey questionnaire. During the social accounting period, **18** people responded. The survey asks participants to select key learning points from a list of 8 – choosing as many as they feel applies to them.

Results show that:

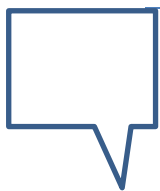
- most people (**94%**) go away with a better understanding of sight loss, hearing loss, Deafness and Deafblindness and a greater awareness of the impact of living with a sight and/or hearing loss.

- **89%** feel they know how to guide someone who is blind or partially sighted and have gained practical information and guidance about supporting someone with a sight and/or hearing loss.
- **83%** feel they gained information about NESS services.
- **78%** believe they have gained skills in communicating with people with a sensory loss and more awareness of the impact of the day to day barriers of living with a sensory loss.
- **72%** feel they have gained an awareness of how to reduce the day to day barriers that people face.
- **89%** said they felt more confident supporting people with a sensory loss.
- **100%** said they would recommend the sensory awareness training to others.

It is clear that the training is generally perceived by participants as being very good and effective at raising awareness of the needs of people with a sensory loss.

Feedback comments about Sensory Awareness Training

The following comments have been identified to reflect the generally positive feedback that is received about the training.



“By far one of the best training I have been on”

“Fantastic day really dispels any myths and assumptions”

“Friendly relaxed atmosphere. Felt free to share ideas.
Would highly recommend.”

– Quotes from SAT Participants’ survey

The full report is available at Appendix 9.

Volunteering- working together

We invest money, time and training in our **124** volunteers, making sure they are properly equipped for the job they do and have adequate support from dedicated employees. Many volunteers have taken the time to tell us why they like volunteering at NESS.



“I love the opportunities for interaction with others afforded by the organisation”

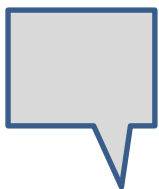
Quote from NESS Members' survey 2018

The people who volunteer for NESS supply a valuable addition to everything we do. Without their contribution we would deliver a lot less to people with sight and hearing loss. We have used Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) as a tool to calculate a financial value of £205,619 as their contribution to the organisation. The hourly rate assigned to each role varies according to recognised payscales for equivalent job roles. These ranged from £9.00. for a cafeteria worker to £57.39 for an executive director.

Key data used in proxy payscales

	Annual salary	Hrly rate	source
Field work assistant	£19,633	£10.42	NESS payscale/ Living wage
Cafeteria worker*	£16,494	£9.00	
Taxi driver (no tips)*	£18,517	£9.82	payscale
Admin	£17,985	£9.54	NESS
Reception/ resource worker	£20,153	£10.69	NESS
Executive director*	£77,054	£57.39	payscale
Maintenance and repair worker*	£18,764	£9.95	payscale
www.payscale.com/research/UK/Country=United_Kingdom/Salary			

The full VIVA report can be found at Appendix 10.



“As a volunteer, I feel really appreciated when included in these meetings and some ideas or suggestions we might give are listened to and indeed encouraged”

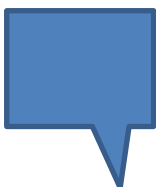
- Volunteer, Reception, Aberdeen

The VIVA ratio is 1: 7.3 which means for every pound we spend on volunteers we get back £7.30 in the value of the work they do. This amounts to more than a seven-fold return on the organisation’s investment - a really good deal!

Our VIVA also produced the following results:

- The total number of volunteer hours given to the organisation in the year was **17,014**
- The full-time equivalent of the total volunteer hours: **nine** additional full-time staff to do the work that volunteers currently contribute

This is added value in its truest sense.



“I love volunteering at NESS: you always make sure that we know that we're appreciated.”

Quote from NESS Customer survey 2017

9. Key Aspects of our organisation

(a) Human resources

Organising our workforce

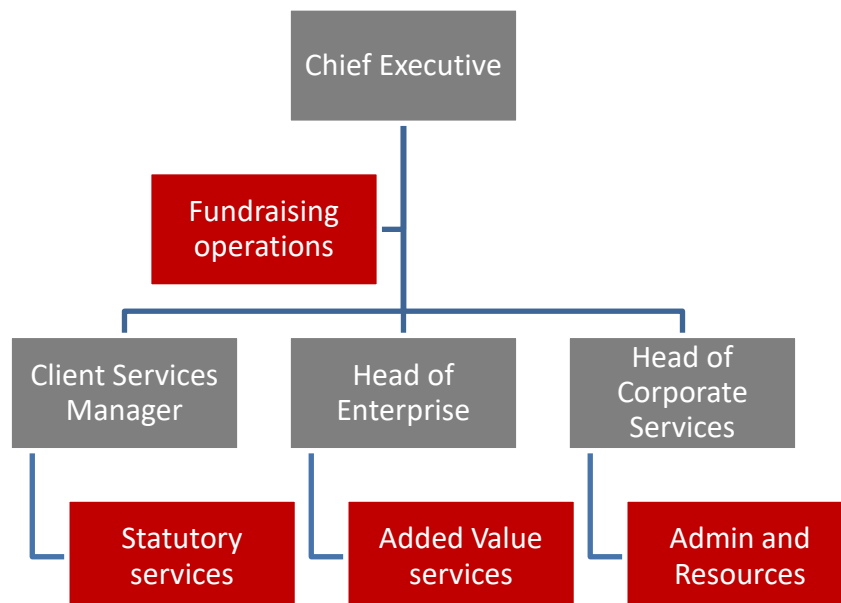
Members of staff are based at four premises:

1. 21 John Street, Aberdeen (Headquarters, owned)
2. Number Ten, 10 Constitution Road, Dundee (leased)
3. Elizabeth House, 10 Victoria Crescent, Elgin, Moray (leased)
4. Kinloch Care Centre, Carnoustie, Angus (tied with SLA)

NESS resource centres are open for public access in Aberdeen, Dundee and Elgin. The office base in Angus, which is within an Angus Council facility, does not have public access.

There are three organisational sections within NESS:

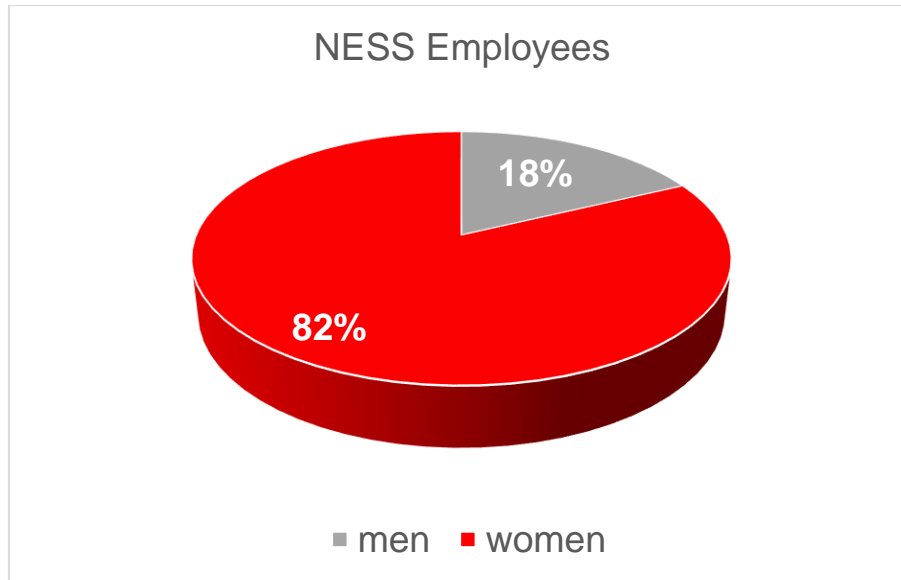
1. Statutory Services, including our core Social Work and Field work teams in Aberdeen, Angus, Dundee, and Moray.
2. Added Value Services, including our grant funded projects and charitable functions.
3. Administration/ resources including our resource centres and the essential backroom and support functions.



A detailed organigram is available at Appendix 11

NESS Employees

In March 2018, NESS employed 58 people, 12, or 21%, of whom, have sensory loss making them eligible to use NESS. There were 27 full time and 31 part time members of staff, making a full time equivalent of 46.

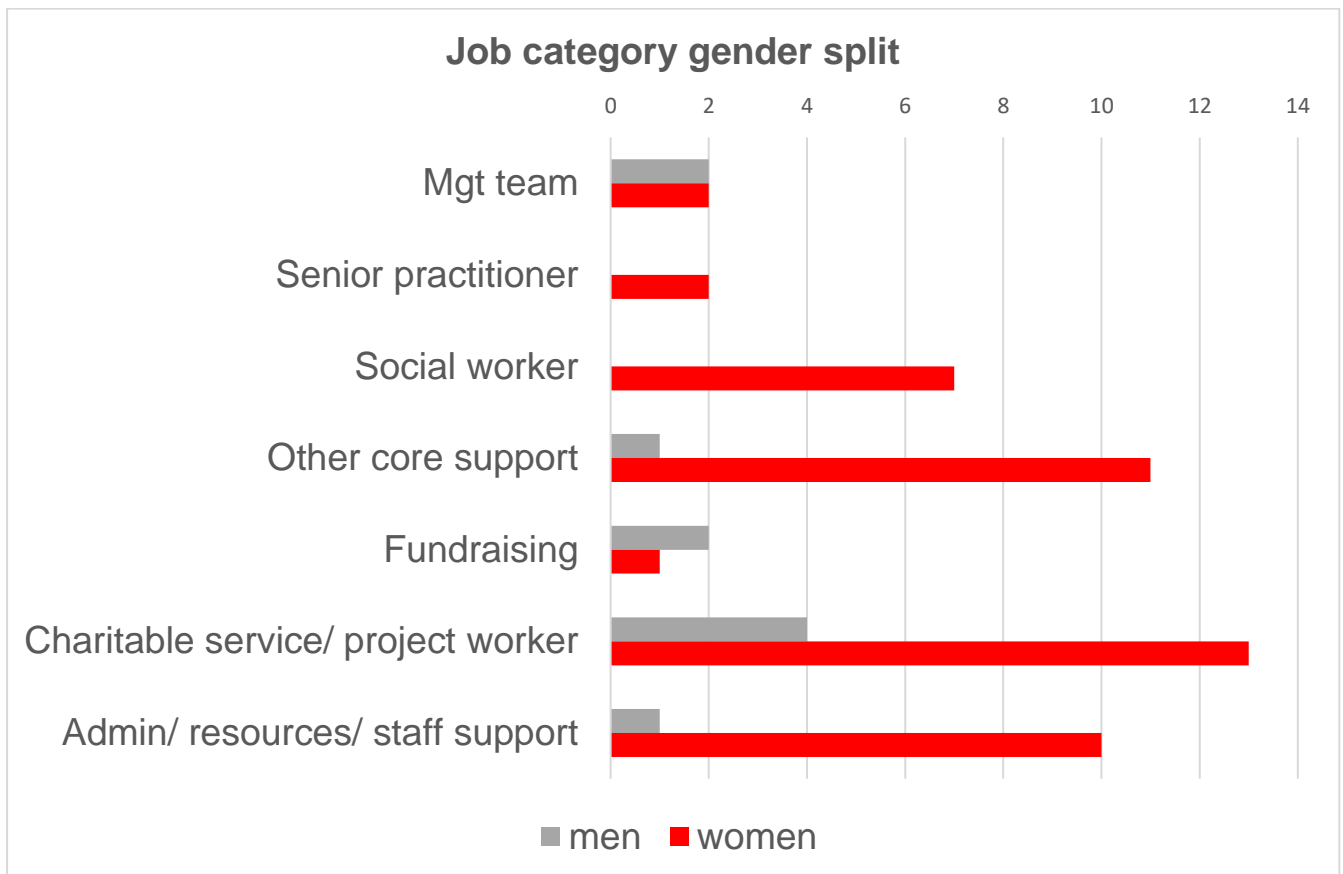


The management team of four is made up of two women and two men, 50% of whom have a sensory loss.

The flat management structure reflects close supervisory relationships with **no employee being more than three supervisory stages from the Chief Executive.**

NESS Employee roles	
Management	Chief Executive
	Heads of Service
	Client Services Manager Head of Corporate Services Head of Enterprise
Practitioner	Supervisor role
	Senior Practitioner Senior Administrator Senior Project Co-ordinator
	Practitioner/ team member role
	Social worker Rehab worker Field work assistant/ guide communicator Resources/ equipment worker Receptionist Administrator Training Fundraising officer Project co-ordinator Service worker Interpreter Reader/ Driver (colleague support)

42% of the women and 20% of the men work under 30 hours a week. The average working hours for women is 28 hours and for men it is 32. UK companies with 250 or more employees had to publish their gender pay gap data by April 2018, under a new legal requirement. With a comparatively small workforce in this arena, of 56 employees, NESS was not required to report, but we felt it would be useful and informative to calculate our gender pay gap.



(Data for calculations available at Appendix 14)

The lowest paid positions are chiefly occupied by women. There are ten men and 46 women. **All positions at NESS attract equal pay regardless of gender.**

At NESS the **gender pay gap is 3.7% in favour of men** excluding the CEO. This means that **women earn 96p for every £1 men earn.** **NESS will continue to monitor this situation and where possible take action to improve the balance.**

The ratio of CEO's earnings to the average wag is 2.64 : 1

Volunteers

In March 2018, 124 people were registered as volunteers for NESS, 31 or 25% of whom were also service users. NESS involves volunteers in all aspects of its operation. Volunteers work alongside and in partnership with paid members of staff and permeate the organisation at all levels.

Investors in People

A consolidation review audit was completed during this social accounting period and the Standard and Gold Award were both maintained.

Investors in People Award for Excellence

NESS won the Excellence in the Third sector award for organisations with 249 employees or less in 2016.

“NESS has transformed itself over the last ten years by putting people first, they have developed an innovative and flexible approach which encourages staff to be responsive and effective when supporting people who are blind, partially sighted, deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind.” Investors in People judging panel

A Living Wage Employer

All UK employers are now required by law to pay the minimum wage. During this accounting period, UK Government set the National living wage level at £7.50.

Going beyond our legal obligations, NESS became accredited as a Living Wage employer in November 2016, joining the Living Wage Foundation's nationwide campaign to help reduce poverty.

This commits us to making sure that every employee who works for NESS, including our cleaners, who are subcontracted, earns the Real Living Wage of £8.45 p/h*, as a minimum.

* At 31 March 2018

“We are delighted to welcome NESS to the Living Wage movement as an accredited employer.

“The best employers are voluntarily signing up to pay the Living Wage now. The Living Wage is a robust calculation that reflects the real cost of living, rewarding a hard day’s work with a fair day’s pay.

Living Wage Foundation Director, Katherine Chapman

(b) Good governance and accountability

NESS has a sound framework for making decisions on any future developments and a robust structure in place for implementing them.

Board of Directors (trustees of NESS)

Between April 2017 and March 2018 eight volunteers, were appointed as directors, joining the seven existing members. One other resigned during the same period leaving a board of 14 directors in March 2018.

The Chief Executive was the only paid employee on the board and stood down as a director during this year. With the exception of Council-appointed observers who sit on the board but do not have a vote, all the other directors are volunteers. This includes the Chairman, Deputy Chair and Treasurer. Managers routinely report to the board on performance.

The board of NESS has one sub-committee, the Finance, Governance and Planning committee which retains a strategic overview of operational matters.

Members of NESS

As a company limited by guarantee, NESS is required to have members who are responsible should the business fold. NESS offers membership to its stakeholders, who have the option of joining for an annual or a lifetime membership fee, entitling them to vote at official company meetings. **98** people were subscribed as Members of the Company

limited by guarantee, **58** were service users and family members. The remaining **40** were directors and former directors, employees and previous employees.

Compliance

Requirements

NESS has made the required submissions to Companies House in Edinburgh and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). It has also followed the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during this social accounting period.

NESS' legal and other requirements as a company limited by guarantee, a charity and a business, are all accounted for in the key aspects checklist, which is included as Appendix 13.

(c) Financial sustainability

NESS has developed a diverse range of methods to stimulate income and maintains sufficient reserves to cover 4 months running costs and its pension fund deficit.

A significant amount of income from non-statutory and charitable sources permits NESS to carry out its range of added value services. This is drawn from fundraising events and activities, grants and trust fund applications and legacies and bequests as illustrated above on page 14.

(d) Environmental sustainability

NESS is committed to minimising the negative impact of its activities on the environment. Building on our Environmental Policy we have introduced a six point Green Office protocol.

We will:

1. Minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are as efficient as possible
2. Minimise toxic emissions by vehicles used for NESS' business

3. Actively promote recycling
4. Source products to minimise the environmental impact of the everyday running of the organisation
5. Meet all the environmental legislation that relates to the organisation
6. Make all staff aware of environmental issues and enlist their help in maintaining a green office

Further details can be seen at Appendix 12.

(e) Economic impact

NESS' turnover has increased by over £500,000 in the last four years and last year it contributed a turnover of over £2,336,000 to the economy of Scotland. NESS currently employs 12 employees with a disability: 20% of the workforce.

(f) Demographic impact

NESS works with older people to help them to remain independent, by overcoming barriers arising from sight and hearing impairment in later life.

As at 31 March 2018 NESS was supporting 821 people who were 65-75 (up from 598 in 2014), and 3,775 people who were 75 and over (up from 2,616 in 2014), to find functional and practical solutions to sensory and age-related challenges.

10. Review of previous Social Accounts

Our last Social Audit Panel of 2014 identified a number of important issues to be considered during this social accounting cycle. In particular the following three points:

- (i) Consultation with company members,
- (ii) Consultation with volunteers

Both have been addressed in the consultations detailed above

(iii) Inclusion of data/ views gathered for funders/ other purposes, Quantitative data from various funder reports and qualitative data in the form of sporadic stakeholder feedback have been included throughout this report

This is what we took away from it to action:

1. To embed stakeholder, and particularly, service user feedback into the organisation's practice review processes to ensure that service user experience informs practice improvement.
2. To overhaul our online digital presence as a platform for communication with all stakeholders and the wider world.
3. To continue to develop our profile as a people champion, demonstrating the values we place on the people who deliver its mission.
4. To demonstrate the value of our volunteers' contribution.
5. To develop a full range of integrated joint sensory services for the whole population it serves.
6. To develop and incorporate additional mechanisms which demonstrate our impact.

The next section lists what we have done since then.

11. What's new since last time?

- ❖ A new Stakeholder Feedback process which captures sporadic feedback and uses it for continuing improvement
- ❖ A new website and integrated online digital platform for social media
- ❖ Investors in People Gold, Excellence in the Third Sector award winner 2016, Living Wage foundation accredited 2016
- ❖ Volunteer participation in Annual Review and Celebration
- ❖ Heroes lunch and thank you events
- ❖ VIVA
- ❖ Over 50s Gold Star Awards 2015
- ❖ Hearing aid batteries distributed from all our resource centres
- ❖ Hear 2 Help in our Aberdeen and Moray resource centres
- ❖ Hear 2 Help at the Audiology clinic at Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin
- ❖ Full statutory service for blind and partially sighted people in Dundee, following competitive tendering in 2016 - Dundee now has a fully integrated joint sensory service
- ❖ Rehabilitation and equipment provision for blind and partially sighted people in Angus, following competitive tendering in 2016. This is run in conjunction with our deaf service and is operated as a joint sensory service, including equipment, advocacy, guide communicator support and awareness training
- ❖ New SLA in Moray following competitive retendering at the end of 2016
- ❖ Added value services began in Dundee and Angus in 2017
- ❖ Dundee Employment Service 2017
- ❖ Dundee based ICT for All service 2017
- ❖ New Volunteer Co-ordinator post in Angus and Dundee supporting people to volunteer with the many faces of NESS
- ❖ Peer support social groups in Arbroath and Forfar 2018
- ❖ Support to pre-existing groups in Montrose and Carnoustie 2018
- ❖ External evaluation (Blake Stevenson) for CIS project
- ❖ Measuring Up - Organisational Impact assessment
- ❖ Visionary's Inspiring Impact project
- ❖ Development of NESS Theory of Change

What have we stopped doing?

- Statutory service for deaf people in Perth & Kinross
- Low vision aids clinic in Aberdeen

12. Impact headliners, Actions and Recommendations

Impact Headliners:

Better opportunities

- ✓ **Our objective is to enable people with sensory loss to reach and maintain the intended outcomes we call 'Living it My Way'.**
- ✓ **Our passion lies in continuously adapting and improving our services to make a genuine difference.**
- ✓ **Our successes in securing repeat investment indicates satisfaction with how investors view our performance.**

Improved emotional wellbeing

- ✓ **Our integrated service model, for the many who are facing a dual sensory loss, is more efficient and has a greater impact.**
- ✓ **"The difference NESS has made to me is immense. They have taken the anxious feelings away"**
Quote taken from NESS Customer survey 2017
- ✓ **76% of NESS members felt we always live by our values and 23% felt we usually do.**

Increased independence

- ✓ **95% of our members said that NESS achieves its intended impact when measured against its mission.**
- ✓ **People living with sensory loss are achieving a level of independence way beyond their initial expectations.**
- ✓ **We focus on solutions, not problems and try and help people find their own, by providing them with the information, equipment and support they need to do so.**

Experience reduced discrimination

- ✓ **Our proactive 'log, report and respond' approach to evaluating each service user's experience helps keep team members responsible for their own performance and motivated towards continuous improvement.**
- ✓ **60% of our service users are aged 75 and over. NESS works with older people to help them to remain as independent as possible, by overcoming barriers arising from sight and hearing impairment in later life.**

Better integration into society

- ✓ **We encourage activities where youngsters and parents can meet with peers in similar circumstances and learn from each other.**
- ✓ **124 people were registered as volunteers with NESS, 31 or 25% of whom are also service users.**

Reach

- ✓ **Our statutory funded services saw 850 new service users this year out of a total of 1,260 people supported.**
- ✓ **We had 11,700 visits to our centre in Aberdeen, 2,100 to Elgin and 873 to Dundee in this period.**
- ✓ **In this year we had 16,272 unique website hits and our Facebook reach was 170,160.**
- ✓ **NESS has delivered 56 training or information events, reaching 1,223 people.**
- ✓ **For every pound we spent on volunteers we got back £7.36 in the value of the work they did. This amounts to more than a seven-fold return on the organisation's investment - This is added value in its truest sense.**

Actions:

Commenced:

- ✓ Additional staff and volunteer resources in Dundee and Angus
- ✓ Efforts to try more 'local neighbourhood' activities in Angus and Moray, which are chiefly rural areas

Planned operational:

- ☐ Development of further Added Value services and infrastructure
- ☐ Recruitment of volunteers in Dundee and Angus
- ☐ Review our processes: Using the Living it My Way outcomes to demonstrate our impact
- ☐ Our people: Debate "What is high performance and how to reward it?"
- ☐ Review purpose, function and reach of NESS News
- ☐ Monitor gender pay gap

Recommendations for the next Social Accounting Cycle

- ☐ Link all actions with strategic plans and business planning mechanisms
- ☐ Embed our 'Living it My Way' outcomes into case evaluations
- ☐ Develop additional ways of better evidencing NESS' impact to statutory and other investors
- ☐ Consider using social science methodology to analyse qualitative feedback to better demonstrate our impact
- ☐ Implement actions from the planned reviews above
- ☐ Taking account of the unique set of needs associated with Acquired Deafblindness, we will look at ways to differentiate this category of need in our case records system and so we can extract relevant data when required.

13. Reporting back to stakeholders

The full document **NESS Social Accounts 2017-18** will be available online through our website and stakeholders will be notified. It will also feature on the Social Audit Network website. Hard copies will be available for all stakeholders who require one.

A summary version **NESS Social Impact Report, second edition** will be widely distributed and produced in accessible text, audio format and a BSL translation signed and available on DVD. These versions will also be also available to access on our website.

14. Appendices and list of Annexes

List of Appendices

1. Annual report
2. Service user profile
3. Expanded Theory of Change
4. Developing our outcomes and indicators
5. Feedback routes
6. (a) Customer survey 2017
(b) Customer survey report
7. (a) Member survey 2018
(b) Member survey report
8. Footfall study report
9. Sensory Awareness Training report
10. VIVA 2018
11. Organigram
12. Green Office protocol
13. Key Aspects Checklist
14. Data for pay gap analysis

List of Annexes

- A. See Hear: A strategic framework for meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment in Scotland' (Scottish Government)
- B. Seeing it My Way: A universal quality and outcomes framework for blind and partially sighted people (UK Vision strategy)
- C. IIP Survey results and staff ideas
- D. Investors in People Survey: IIP40 questions
- E. NESS Environmental Policy

The Appendices and Annexes are available digitally on our website at:

<https://www.nesensoryservices.org/appendices-annexes>

15. Abbreviations and Glossary

Key (used throughout)

B =	Registered Blind
PS =	Registered Partially Sighted
N =	Not Registered but with impaired vision
D =	Deafened
DB =	Deafblind (Registered Blind or Partially Sighted with significant hearing loss)
DBSL =	Deaf BSL user
HH =	Hard of hearing
VI =	Vision impaired (includes all categories relating to sight loss)

(Table already seen on page 13)

Service user/ Customer/ Person known to NESS	A person with who is known to NESS by virtue of their sensory loss and eligibility to access some or any of our services.
Key Stakeholder	Anyone with a stake in NESS including service users, investors and NESS People, but excluding Suppliers
BSL	British Sign Language. One of the three recognised languages of Scotland, along with English and Gaelic. The favoured language of many profoundly Deaf people in Scotland. It makes use of space and involves movement of the hands, body, face and head. It is not a written language and needs to be translated in order to be represented in writing. Many thousands of people who are not Deaf also use BSL, such as hearing relatives of Deaf people, sign language interpreters or as a result of other contact with the British Deaf community.
Sensory loss	Commonly used to represent Deafness, Blindness, Hearing loss, Sight loss, Vision impairment, Deafblind, Deaf BSL user.
SAT	Sensory Awareness Training
VIVA	Volunteer and Value Audit
liP	Investors in People