



north east
sensory services
achieving independence for blind & deaf people

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



The Board of Directors

Chairman

John Legg

Appointed in Meeting

Laura Sharp (Vice-Chairman)
John Imrie
Rev. Mary Whittaker
Stephen McPherson
Ian Herd
Len Ironside
Hannah Watt
Colin Boag
Frank Wahedally
Fraser Crerar
Lynne Hawcroft
Christina Cooper
Paul Duncan

Observer

Cllr Theresa Coull, Moray Council
Cllr Douglas Lumsden, Aberdeen City Council

November 2018

Chairman's Report by John Legg

Over the last 12 months, NESS has reached a record number of service users, forged new partnerships and continued to provide vital high-quality services to a group of people who, all too often, find themselves vulnerable, isolated and marginalised.



On behalf of the Board of Directors I'd like to pass on our warm thanks to the many individuals, organisations, businesses and stakeholders who have contributed to that success and helped us to move a step closer to achieving independence for blind and deaf people living in the North East of Scotland. I would especially like to acknowledge the generosity of our funders and the dedication and effort of our staff and volunteers who, day in day out, go the extra mile for service users.

Among the many achievements we were delighted to see the development of new services in Dundee and Angus, as well as the establishment of a Service User Forum for the area. It was also heartening to see the way our contracted services were valued by local authorities, the NHS and by our various donors.

NESS regularly reviews each area of service delivery using a variety of methods, including performance statistics, detailed evaluation reports and case studies. The case studies are particularly useful in conveying the many ways that NESS works to assist blind and deaf people to tackle problems and barriers and to achieve more independence. During the year, NESS carried out its second social audit. Initial findings look encouraging and we will be publishing the full Social Accounts and Impact Report within the next few months and these will be available on our website.

During the year, we carried out major reviews of our policy framework, our procedures for managing risk and our pension provision. We also took the opportunity to refresh the support we receive from external advisors and to further strengthen our Board of Directors. With increasing pressure on public monies and personal finance, we have strived to provide value for money, to secure new sources of funding and to ensure the robust management of each and every resource.

Living with a significant sensory loss can be difficult and challenging. It can wear you down and rob you of hope. It doesn't however have to be that way. With the right level of support, life can become easier, more fulfilling and certainly more manageable. NESS is committed to providing the right level of high quality, innovative and effective support to make that difference. If you think you can help us to do that, in whatever way you can, then please contact us.

Chief Executive's Report by Graham Findlay

Review of Activities in meeting our Objectives

Within the financial year 2017/18 NESS has consolidated its existing services and developed further added value support.

Our Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with Aberdeen, Moray, Dundee and Angus Health and Social Care Partnerships continued to be delivered successfully and to a high standard.



We are grateful to all of the Health and Social Care Partnerships we work with for their continued trust in NESS.

NESS continues to make available our non-statutory services to people living in Aberdeenshire where we don't currently have a statutory contract. Many of our Added Value services are accessed by service users from Aberdeenshire.

Quality Systems

NESS holds the Investors in People (IIP) standard and the advanced Gold Standard and we are working hard to achieve a high level under the new Generation 6 framework when fully assessed.

Service User Statistics

The total number of service users on our database for the whole of Grampian and Tayside in the year to 31 March 2017 was **6,396** (**6,404** including people with hearing related problems such as tinnitus).

Awareness Raising

Over the year, we ran or took part in **56** awareness raising events attended by a total of **1,223** people. This includes our one day Awareness Training sessions as well as bespoke training sessions delivered to other organisations, information events with larger groups, talks to professional bodies and smaller community groups and combined fundraising/ awareness raising events.

Added Value

NESS provides a BSL to English Language interpreter booking service. The Trainee Interpreter we recruited in September 2016, has now achieved fully qualified status and has registered as such with SASLI¹, the appropriate professional body. NESS undertook **493** assignments during this period with our in-house interpreter fulfilling **273** of them. Assignments included GPs, hospitals and colleges and universities,

¹ Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters

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.

Providing emotional and practical support as well as information and advice, our Hospital Information Service supported **330** Eye Clinic patient cases from across NHS Grampian and Shetland during the year. Our Hospital Information Officer is also involved in making sure that information is available to patients attending Audiology and other clinical departments.

Our Connect Inform Support (CIS) service is for the specific group of advanced elderly people with significant sight and/ or hearing loss and live in their own homes who are experiencing social isolation. Three years into this Big Lottery Funded four year project, **295** elderly people with significant sensory loss have reported feeling less isolated and lonely as a result of being involved. This has helped them keep healthy, safe and independent and enabled some to remain in their own homes. It is looking like we will meet our target for the full four years, which is **320** people.

Our Employment Support service provides a personalised service to people living with serious sensory loss in Aberdeen City who are of working age. It enables people to access relevant employment, education and/ or training opportunities and/ or to sustain their occupation. Between April 2017 and March 2018, **59** people benefitted from this support in Aberdeen and **21** in our newly started sister service in Dundee.

Offering individual assessment and tuition as well as classes on using digital technology, this year our “ICT for all” service reached **180 people** with serious sensory loss. From our bases in Aberdeen, Dundee and Elgin we have supported people all over the region.

Our Young Peoples’ Sensory Service (YPSS) is the only project in Scotland that provides integrated sensory support to young people aged 0-19. Investment from the BIG Lottery’s Young Start Fund, has enabled us to reach **172** youngsters with serious sight and/ or hearing loss and their families. Providing opportunities for them to do the same things and experience the same challenges as their sighted and hearing peers, we have delivered activities which have helped them form friendships, build confidence, learn skills and become independent. We’ve also held 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.

Volunteer supported services and activities have delivered an increased range of support services and peer-led activities, social, leisure and peer support groups in Aberdeen and Moray. Assistance from the Angus Society for the Blind has enabled us to complement our statutory services, by developing peer support groups in

Arbroath and Forfar, adding to the range of options available to people with sensory loss in Angus. Further volunteer activity is also being developed in Angus and Dundee.

The list of clubs and groups that are supported by NESS, or that use NESS facilities, is long and varied, but all rely heavily on our volunteers. The **124** people who generously volunteered for NESS during the year have made a significant contribution. We invest money, time and training in our volunteers, making sure they are properly supported and equipped for the job they do. We used Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) to calculate their contribution to the organisation as **£205,889**. For every pound we spent on volunteers, they generated **£7.30** in the value of the work they delivered. This amounts to more than a *sevenfold* return on the organisation's investment.

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 fulltime staff to do the work that volunteers currently contribute.

This is added value in its truest sense.

Facilities

We recognise the importance of maintaining our facilities to a high standard and continue to spend a proportional amount to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Governance

Our Board of Directors oversaw the development and implementation of our new five year business plan. The 2018 action plan is well under way to full implementation.

During the year Graham Findlay retired from the Board following his seven years of service.

We have recruited new directors from a wide variety of backgrounds and skills based on our skills matrix and look forward to working with them going forward.

Our Service User Forums in Aberdeen and Moray continue to be well attended and we added the Dundee and Angus forum as well.

Fundraising and Promotional Initiatives

Over the year we again delivered a range of fundraising initiatives. Our Savour Charity Ball at the five star Marcliffe Hotel again proved successful and we have added a number of new events to our calendar. NESS appointed our first Fundraising Co-ordinator for the Dundee/Angus area within the year.

NESS continues to be in the public profile and we are regularly featured in local and regional press, radio and TV. We have also expanded our reach with some media coverage in the Dundee and Angus areas.

NESS continues to be a member of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, the Moray Chamber of Commerce, the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI).

We are grateful to the following Trust Funds for supporting our added value projects:

Anderson Anderson & Brown Charitable Initiative (AABi)	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
Aberbrothock Skea Trust	Angus	Volunteers
Big Lottery Fund Youngstart	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
Birkdale Trust for Hearing Impaired Ltd	Aberdeen	YPSS
Fairer Aberdeen Fund	Aberdeen	Employment
John Gordon's Charitable Fund	Aberdeen	Dishwasher
Lord Provosts Charitable Trust Aberdeen	Aberdeen	Volunteers
Margaret Murdoch Charitable Trust	Angus	Volunteers
Morrisons Foundation	Dundee	ICT
Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)	Aberdeen	Hospital Info
Santander Foundation	Aberdeen	Employment
Scotland's Digital Participation Charter	Dundee	ICT
Shell St Fergus	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
The Adamson Trust	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
The MacRobert Trust	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
The New Maclay Murray & Spens Charitable Trust	Abdn/Moray	YPSS
The Robertson Trust	Aberdeen	ICT
The Robertson Trust	Dundee	Employment

Staffing

During the financial year we welcomed the following new staff to our team:

- Kirsti Dicks – Social Worker – Aberdeen
- Lynsey Mason – CIS Coordinator – Elgin
- Louisa Thain - CIS administrator – Elgin
- Joan Kennedy – Volunteer Coordinator – Angus/Dundee and Fundraiser Angus/Dundee

NESS recognise that our staff are our greatest asset and four staff received long service awards: Sheena Holt, Guide Communicator, Elaine Taylor, Social Worker, Margret Scrutton, Reader/Driver, Neil Skene, Fundraising Co-ordinator.

We continued to offer successful Social Work student placements within the organisation and continued to support senior school pupils with short term work experience placements. We had our first social work student join us in Dundee.

During the year, we were visited by two Scottish Government Ministers, the Minister for Children & Young People and the Minister for Mental Health. We are grateful for the interest shown by both national and local politicians on the work of NESS.

Strategies and Campaigns

We continue to support local and national strategies and campaigns including:

- British Sign Language Act (Scotland), and the two year implementation plan,
- The See Hear Sensory Impairment Strategy,
- Aberdeen, Moray, Angus, Aberdeenshire and Dundee See Hear Strategies.

National Representation

We continue to represent the needs of our service users on the following groups:

- Scottish Government Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment,
- Scottish Government Cross Party Group on Deafness,
- Visionary, the UK Association for Local Societies for the Visually Impaired, our CEO is the current Chairman,
- SCOD, Scottish Council on Deafness Members Forum, (now Deaf Scotland),
- SCOVl, Scottish Council on Visual Impairment,
- Scottish Vision, Hearing and Stroke Network,
- Institute of Fundraising,
- Thomas Pocklington Trust, our CEO is a member of the board of Trustees,
- Vision UK, our CEO is a member of the board of Trustees.

Planned Developments for 2018/19

- Implement our action plan for year one of our new business plan,
- Develop fundraising across Dundee and Angus,
- Continue to input and influence local and national decision makers,
- Review our Media and PR support and larger event developments,
- Develop an action plan based on the outcomes of our Investors in People review,
- Publish the second edition of our Social Accounts,
- Work with funders in Aberdeen to achieve a new service level agreement.

Recognition for an Outstanding Team

In March this year, NESS was put forward as one of 60 nominees for the HEART Awards – **‘Having Exceptional Achievement Recognised Together’** – designed to celebrate the outstanding work of colleagues in Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership and its partner organisations.

As finalists in the **‘Empowering Other People’** category, we were invited to attend the glamorous presentation event in the Beach Ballroom, only to find out that we had indeed won this award.



The proud team representing NESS with their trophy

And here's what the people we empower have to say:

“The person who visited was knowledgeable, polite & sensitive to hearing loss needs, The TV headset has made a huge difference - able to enjoy & engage in programmes & hear the news again. Thank you so much.” - Dundee

“Very happy with services and staff excellent very friendly+helpful. Thank you for all your help, really appreciate all that is being done for me. Best wishes to all involved.” - Angus

“Just to let you know I used the loop system last night it's fantastic got on really well with it and can honestly say it mad a real difference to me.” - Moray

“I am delighted with the service provided by NESS to my uncle. The help and support was invaluable to us from providing assistance in claiming benefits to providing guidance with visual aids, I could not have asked for any better support. Thanks to the team for all their help.” - Aberdeen

When the team gets together to help – a case story

Mr A, age 59, married, working full time, was referred to NESS from the Eye Clinic having recently been certified as Partially Sighted. The social worker visited to undertake the assessment, and discovered that Mr A had been profoundly Deaf since childhood and, having initially attended a specialist Deaf school, had completed his education in a mainstream setting, leaving without qualifications. He communicated through lip reading, residual hearing (with hearing aids) and did not use sign language. The recent diagnosis of partial sight was therefore a traumatic experience for him and his wife. It was affecting both his emotional and physical health.

The primary concerns at assessment were:

- Being able to work,
- Being able to get out and about independently (he had previously had to relinquish his driving licence),
- Being able to communicate, given that vision was central to his ability to lip read and make sense of the world,
- Being able to manage day to day tasks such as choosing clothes or making food
- Being able to emotionally cope with his diagnosis,
- Helping his wife to support him.

The NESS rehabilitation worker assessed the rehabilitation needs and gave advice on using task lighting and contrast in the kitchen and on using utensils safely. He advised Mr A on aids which might help. They also looked at mobility and orientation out and about.

The social worker assisted Mr A to apply for Personal Independence Payment and also referred him to the NESS Employment Service worker, who helped him to apply for Access to Work support to provide taxi transport to and from work, equipment for in the work place to allow him to hear in meetings and dangerous outdoor settings and Sensory Awareness training to the staff team in the workplace from the NESS training officer.

The NESS resource assistants issued a TV loop system to allow Mr A to enjoy watching TV at home. The housing association was asked to provide Mr A with a vibrating smoke alarm. Mr A was also referred to Audiology to have his hearing aids adjusted, to optimise his hearing. The social worker continued to offer support to both Mr and Mrs A and helped Mrs A to claim Carers Allowance. As a result, Mr A is more positive about his future prospects and is aware of services available to help him.

Spotlight on: Volunteering at NESS

The **124** 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. According to Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA), a tool to calculate a financial value of volunteer contribution, they have given **£205,889** as their contribution to the organisation.

One of our volunteers in Aberdeen shares his story:

I started volunteering at NESS about 15 years ago. I started helping in the audio library and the gym. I currently volunteer regularly at reception at John Street, welcoming people as they come through the door. I also volunteer helping with the training and both my wife and I have helped with fundraising activities. I have made some good friends here and I really value the positive focus that volunteering at NESS has given me.

I find it really rewarding seeing people coming in with a problem and leaving having had their problem solved. NESS is a bit like a sanctuary for people where they can come and have a chat and feel welcome. The whole team has a part to play from the time of the person's enquiry to the point of them getting the support they are looking for. Whether it's being involved in activities for older people who are isolated, getting new batteries and help for maintaining hearing aids, or advice from our ICT officer, people walk away from NESS happy. Everyone here is helpful, kind, efficient and professional. I know from talking to other volunteers that we all feel that we benefit from being part of what NESS does.

... just some of the NESS volunteer jobs



Service User Numbers as at 31 March 2018

Area	Blind	Part Sighted	Non Reg	Non Reg with Hearing Problems	Hard of Hearing	Deafened	Deaf	Deafblind	Hearing with Related Problems i.e. Tinnitus	Total by Area
Aberdeen City	293	455	310	171	919	47	128	107	7	2437
Aberdeenshire	151	191	129	5	43	8	6	29	9	571
Moray	167	155	154	137	400	20	21	66		1120
Angus	55	56	91	51	236	43	44	28	4	608
Dundee	330	308	191	63	529	61	112	65	8	1667
Perth & Kinross							1			1
Total	996	1165	875	427	2127	179	312	295	28	6404



Our youngsters grappling with a tent



CIS Elgin getting up close with birds of prey



Aberdeen Mens Club Christmas



Preparing for a Hear 2 Help hearing aid maintenance session



Second Anniversary celebration of the Montrose Vision Support Group



Getting more independent with mobility training

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2018 £	Total 2017 £
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	174,080	-	174,080	55,101
Charitable activities	110,219	1,490,937	1,601,156	1,476,979
Other trading activities	134,283	-	134,283	151,598
Investments	58,833	-	58,833	44,268
Total income	477,415	1,490,937	1,968,352	1,727,946
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	139,182	-	139,182	50,972
Charitable activities	513,704	1,643,846	2,157,550	2,017,479
Total expenditure	652,886	1,643,846	2,296,732	2,068,451
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains	(175,471)	(152,909)	(328,380)	(340,505)
Net gains on investments	36,503	-	36,503	294,287
Net (expenditure)/income	(138,968)	(152,909)	(291,877)	(46,218)
Transfers between funds	(149,918)	149,918	-	-
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension plans	1,202,000	-	1,202,000	(858,000)
Net movement in funds	913,114	(2,991)	910,123	(904,218)
Reconciliation of Funds: Total funds brought forward	214,409	35,866	250,275	1,154,493
Total fund carried forward	1,127,523	32,875	1,160,398	250,275

Income from donations and legacies				
	Unrestricted funds 2018 £	Restricted funds 2018 £	Total 2018 £	Restated Total 2017 £
Donations	14,229	-	14,229	17,239
Legacies receivable	159,851	-	159,851	37,862
	174,080	-	174,080	55,101

Incoming resources from charitable activities				
	Unrestricted funds 2018 £	Restricted funds 2018 £	Total 2018 £	Restated Total 2017 £
Contract income	-	1,167,992	1,167,992	1,083,566
Added Value Charitable Services	50,690	322,945	373,635	335,164
Other Charitable Services	59,529	-	59,529	58,249
	110,219	1,490,937	1,601,156	1,476,979

Total expenditure						
	Costs of raising funds	Contract income	Added Value Charitable costs	Other Charitable activities	Total 2018	Restated Total 2017
Direct Costs	£	£	£	£	£	£
Charitable Costs	-	16,772	34,551	46,230	97,553	90,621
Support Costs						
Premises costs	3,980	85,753	57	35,818	125,608	132,923
Payroll	82,875	889,051	355,280	334,489	1,661,695	1,418,384
Other staff costs	-	42,644	13,199	16,062	71,905	73,527
Administration costs	-	35,062	15,096	39,649	89,807	100,529
Communications	435	10,237	-	3,915	14,587	17,464
Legal and professional	3,354	1,416	-	30,187	34,957	43,846
Management charges	-	72,504	23,160	(95,664)	-	-
Notional rent	-	28,000	-	(28,000)	-	-
Fundraising costs	38,066	-	-	-	38,066	52,563
Other costs	-	-	6,824	8,383	15,207	15,957
Overhead contribution	-	-	19,044	(19,044)	-	-
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	10,132	10,132	-
Depreciation	6,092	14,309	2,991	54,823	78,215	74,637
Interest on defined benefit pension scheme	-	-	-	59,000	59,000	48,000
	134,802	1,195,74	470,202	495,980	2,296,732	2,068,181

Attributable to funds as follows				
	Cost of raising funds £	Charitable Activities £	Total 2018 £	Restated Total 2017 £
Unrestricted	139,182	513,704	652,886	641,411
Restricted	-	1,643,846	1,643,846	1,427,040
	139,182	2,157,550	2,296,732	2,068,451
Governance costs included above were:			11,059	6,350

North East Sensory Services

is the operational name of Grampian Society for the Blind, charity registered in Scotland, SC009537, company limited by guarantee SC155630

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