



north east  
**sensory services**

achieving independence for blind & deaf people

# Social Impact Report

## Second Edition

North East Sensory Services  
21 John Street  
Aberdeen  
AB25 1BT

**0345 27 12345**

[info@nesensoryservices.org](mailto:info@nesensoryservices.org)

[www.nesensoryservices.org](http://www.nesensoryservices.org)

NESS' Social Impact Report, second edition, follows on from our first edition, published in 2014.

It is a summary document taken from: NESS Social Accounts 2017-18,  
and covers the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.



Our operations are summarised in the Theory of Change model on the back cover  
The full Social Accounts report may be accessed at: [www.nesensoryservices.org](http://www.nesensoryservices.org) or  
[www.socialauditnetwork.co.uk](http://www.socialauditnetwork.co.uk)

*"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."*

Sue Sadler, Chair of the Social Audit Panel 28 August 2018

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

# Contents

Mission and Vision	02
The People We Serve	03
Our Services	04
Practical and Emotional Support: NESS' Statutory Services	05
Our Impact: Living it My Way	08
Aids for Daily Living	10
NESS Impact Headliners	11
Our Volunteers Add Extra Value	12
Accessible Information	13
Opportunities for People to Meet and Share Experience	14
Quality and Continuing Improvement	15
Financial Information	16
In Summary	17
NESS Theory of Change - Concise Version	18

*NESS is there for me if  
and when I need it.”  
Service user*



## Mission and Vision

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. It covers roughly

one sixth of the land mass and one tenth of the population of Scotland.

We want to achieve our mission in the most effective and sustainable way, so as many people as possible are able to deal with their own challenges and be as independent as they can be.

### 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.”**

### 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.”**

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

***“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.”***

***Graham Findlay, Chief Executive***





## The People We Serve

We support people of any age, in any walk of life who are living with significant sensory loss in the North East of Scotland. The term “sensory loss” covers a broad spectrum of experiences related to loss of sight and/or hearing, including:

- Some people are born blind or deaf
- Some people are born blind and lose their hearing
- Some people are born deaf and lose their vision
- Some people are born deafblind
- Some people become deafblind
- Many more people lose some or all of their sight and/ or hearing at some time during their life

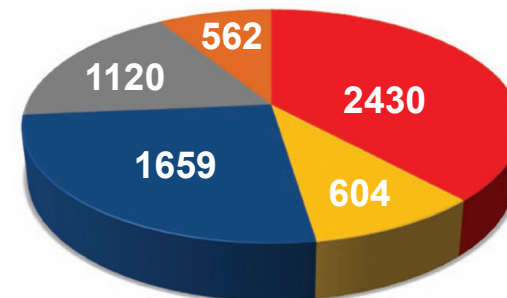
### Life does not stop there!

We enable them all to face their challenges, overcome them and achieve independence as much as they are able.

Everyone’s experiences are different, and everyone will have their own ways of communicating, getting information and dealing with day to day situations.

Sensory loss impacts many aspects of day to day life. People often lose confidence doing activities that they previously enjoyed. Getting the right practical and emotional support as quickly as possible has been shown to help people adapt more quickly to their sensory loss.

Numbers of people in NESS' reach



Aberdeen Angus Dundee City Moray Aberdeenshire



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

Quotes are taken from NESS Customer Survey 2017

### NESS has services in six different local authority areas in Scotland.

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 service provision in other areas.

#### Practical and emotional support:

- Social work and rehabilitation
- Full assessment of need
- Drop-in (Duty) support
- Advocacy support
- Benefits advice/assessments and concessions
- Specialist benefits advice
- Applications, appeals and tribunals
- Emotional support
- Information on Registration and living with sight loss
- Information on living with hearing loss
- Referral or signposting to support services
- Audiology links

#### Accessible information:

- Lip reading classes
- Audio magazine service
- Audio library service
- BSL - English interpreting
- Transcription service

#### Aids for daily living:

- Equipment for people with a sight loss in the home and out and about
- Equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

#### Help with technology and equipment:

- Specialist technology and accessing devices
- NESS Resource Centres
- Equipment, help and advice
- Hearing aid batteries and technical support

#### Added value projects:

- YPSS (Young People's Sensory Service)
- CIS (Connect, Inform, Support)
- Employment services: Aberdeen and Dundee
- ICT for all
- Hospital Information Service

#### Opportunities for people to meet:

- Young People's Sensory Service
- Volunteer training, deployment and support
- Room facilities and support for clubs and groups

#### Additionally:

- NESS offers information, sensory awareness training, advice and support to **carers and relatives**
- NESS provides training, advice and specialist consultation to **other organisations** helping them to meet their own statutory legal requirements

*The staff have given me confidence by training me with my walking aids about town." Service user*

## Practical and Emotional Support: NESS' Statutory Services

In Aberdeen, Dundee and Moray we offer a full Social Work assessment of need, which includes welfare benefit entitlements. In Angus we deliver Rehabilitation and equipment, advocacy and guide communicator support. Much of the equipment we can provide is funded by the local authorities, although 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 alone saw 850 new service users this year, out of a total of 1,260 people they supported.**



We have three Resource Centres open to the public:

- 21 John Street Aberdeen
- Inside the DVA building, Number Ten, 10 Constitution Road, Dundee
- Elizabeth House, 10 Victoria Crescent, Elgin

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

We are hopeful, that using our recently developed organisational outcomes framework, “**Living it my Way**”, reporting on outcomes in the future will be improved. In Aberdeen, our Fieldwork team saw **297** new service users and reopened **195** cases, giving a total of **492** people being 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 drop-in service.

In Angus, we saw **110** new referrals and reopened **93** cases, giving a total of **203** people being supported. 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, giving a total of **306** people being 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 drop-in 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 duty drop-in service in Elgin.

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

***“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.”***

We also welcomed **36** Aberdeenshire residents to NESS in Aberdeen for information or support from our Added Value Services, in addition to the **168** Aberdeenshire people seen by our Hospital Information Service, who have been referred on for support to our colleagues.

**Taken from a thank you letter from a service user**

### Complaints Report

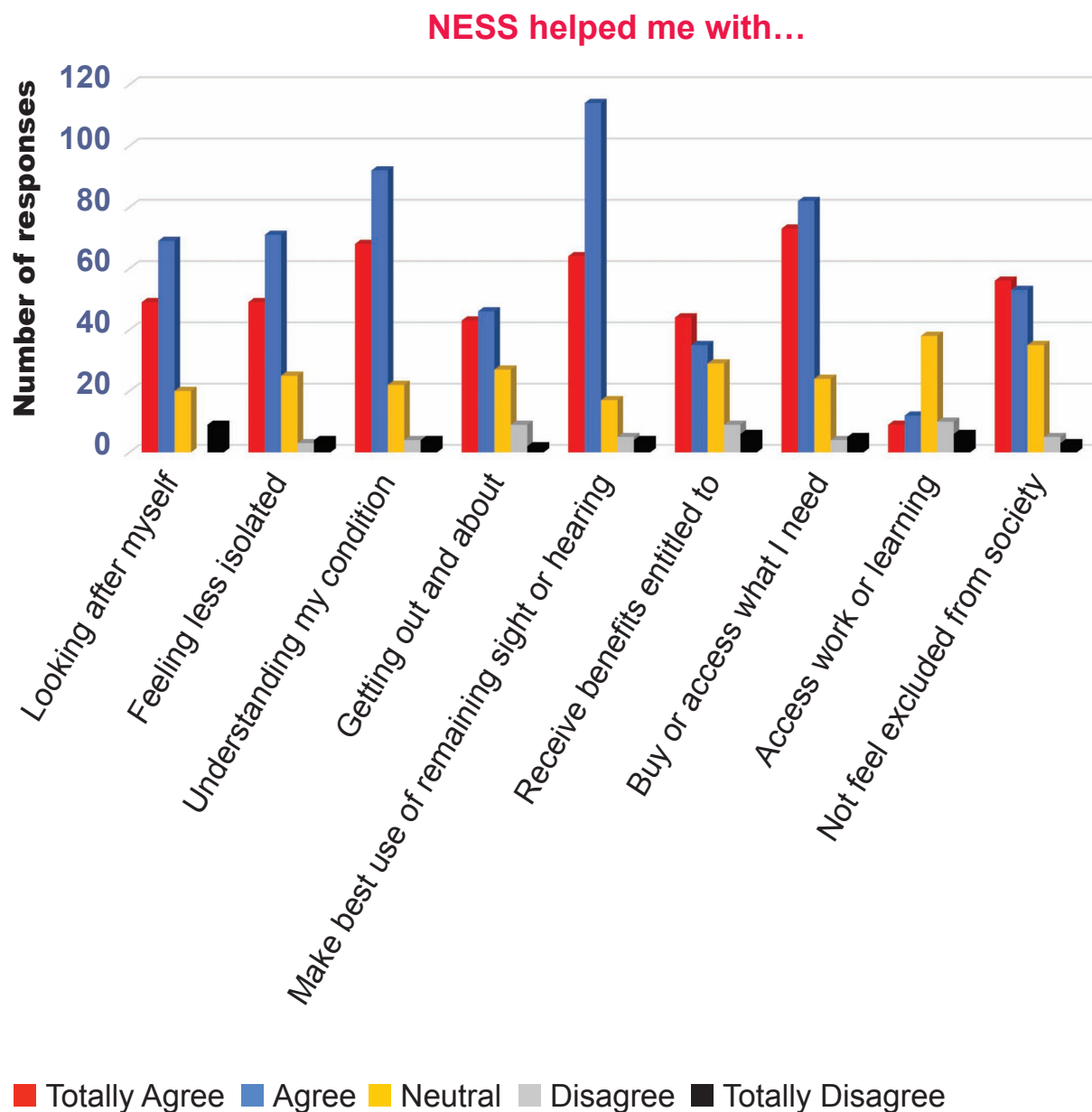
**We received eight complaints regarding four issues during this period:**

- The organisation and catering at a coffee morning
- The specific conduct of a worker
- Use of personal data for mailings
- One incident of a child's behaviour whilst at a club meeting at NESS premises

Each was fully investigated under our complaints procedure and every complainant was informed of the outcome. Where appropriate, we offered further explanation. We appreciate some 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.

The third complaint had also been reported to the Information Commissioner's Office, who investigated fully and concluded that NESS had acted properly and not misused anyone's personal data.





“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”

**- Taken from a service user thank you letter**

### 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.

- Our integrated service model, for the many who are facing a dual sensory loss, is more efficient and has a greater impact.

- 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.



### NESS helps to produce better opportunities:

Our objective is to enable everyone with a sensory loss to reach, maintain and go beyond the intended outcomes we call 'Living it My Way'.



- 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.
- 60% of our service users are aged 75 and over. NESS works with older people to help them to remain as independent as possible.

### NESS' 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 and information events, reaching 1,223 people

Our three Resource Centres are open for public access Monday to Friday. We issue some equipment to people free of charge according to the rules in place in each local authority, which differ. Our Resource Centres also stock equipment available to purchase and staff and volunteers are available to provide practical advice.

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

### Equipment for People with a Sight Loss

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.

### 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” - hearing aid user***

### We are 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 aid users themselves. This helps people to get the best performance from their hearing aids and hear more clearly.



*“Since attending 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.” - Group member and service user*

We have started distributing hearing aid batteries to wearers from each of our three Resource Centres when they drop in. 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 available.



NESS is the leading provider of integrated joint sensory services in Scotland. We have developed an integrated way of working that benefits all our service user group.

NESS frequently takes a leading role and contributes to several strategic and representative bodies, both locally and nationally.

Our Aberdeen Resource Centre is an example of best practice and we have hosted several organisations from across the UK who have visited to see the facility and services in practice and then try and develop their own provision.

NESS contributed to the development of the new register of sight loss with input into the new Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) in conjunction with See Hear and the Scottish Government.

NESS contributed to the development of “SEE HEAR - a strategic framework for meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment in Scotland” and has influenced change via the local implementation groups, including the Aberdeen City group, of which our CEO is the Lead.

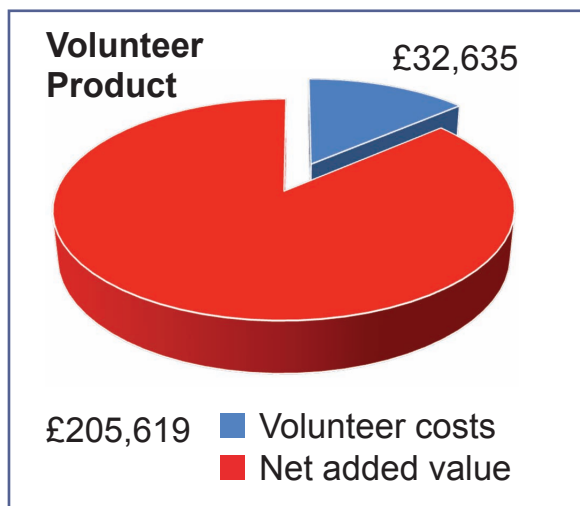
NESS is an active member of various Scotland- and UK-wide influential umbrella groups, including deafscotland (formerly Scottish Council on Deafness), the board of SCOV (Scottish Council on Vision Impairment), Thomas Pocklington Trust and Visionary, where our CEO is the Chair.

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.

## Our Volunteers Add Extra Value

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.

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 the financial value of their contribution to the organisation. The hourly rate assigned to each role varies according to recognised pay scales for equivalent job roles. The costs of recruiting, training and supporting the volunteers is subtracted to reveal a net value of **£205,619** this year.



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.**



### Information can be produced in:

- Large print
- Audio
- BSL on DVD
- Braille

Digital recordings are available on USB flash drives, CDs or DVDs.

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.

When producing information, society usually assumes that people can see visual information and hear audio information. Clearly this is not the case if you have a sensory loss. NESS has developed effective ways of working, and services, to make communication easier.

We routinely produce 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 our quarterly newsletter, we remind people they can change their preferred format for information.

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 SASLI<sup>1</sup> registered BSL interpreter and also use freelance registered interpreters for the assignments we book. This service is charged to the customer making the booking.

NESS undertook 493 interpreting 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 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. Assignments were based in each of the local authority areas we operate in.

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



<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Opportunities for People to Meet and Share Experience



Positive outcomes frequently happen where people meet. NESS provides the opportunity for people to meet one another and gives them information and support at a time that is right for them.

“We encourage activities where youngsters and parents can meet with peers in similar circumstances and learn from each other.”

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. See our website’s “What’s On” section for details.

***NESS' Service User Forum is open to all NESS service users and is an opportunity to feedback, discuss issues, explore possible solutions and exchange views. There are separate meetings in Aberdeen, in Dundee and in Elgin for Moray residents.***

***“I love the opportunities for interaction with others” – service user and volunteer***





“Our passion lies in continuously adapting and improving our services to make a genuine difference.”

**John Legg, Chair of the board of directors.**



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.

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.

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

### Our Values:

In March 2018, we carried out a member survey and asked all our members if they considered that NESS achieves its intended impact when measured against its Mission. It also asked how we perform relative to our core values - that NESS people should be:

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

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

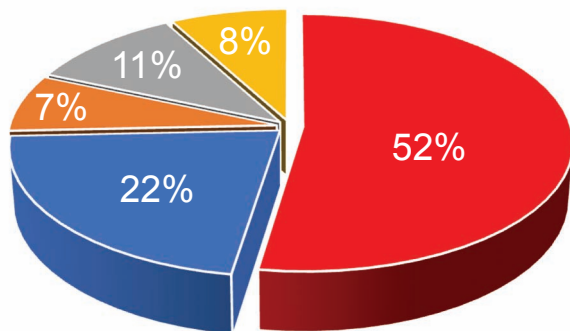
Some of our repeat investors include:



## Financial Information

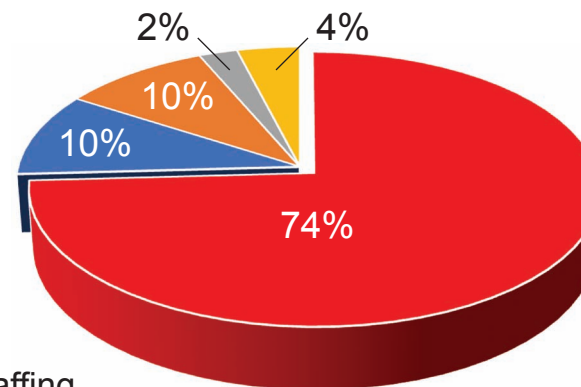
As a charity, over the year April 2017 – March 2018, NESS' income was £ 2.2 Million, drawn from four main funding sources.

**Income April 2017- March 2018**



- 1. Service level agreements
- 2. Trusts and grants
- 3. Legacies and bequests
- 4. Fundraising and commercial activity
- 5. Other

**Expenditure April 2017 - March 2018**



- 1. Staffing
- 2. Supplies
- 3. Business costs
- 4. Stock
- 5. Other

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

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 of 56 employees, NESS was not required to report, but we felt it would be useful and informative to calculate our gender pay gap. 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 act to improve the balance.

The ratio of our top earner to the average wage is 2.64: 1

## In Summary:

**NESS is the 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.**

This Social Impact Report represents a very brief sample of information collected by NESS in its Social Accounts 2017- 18.

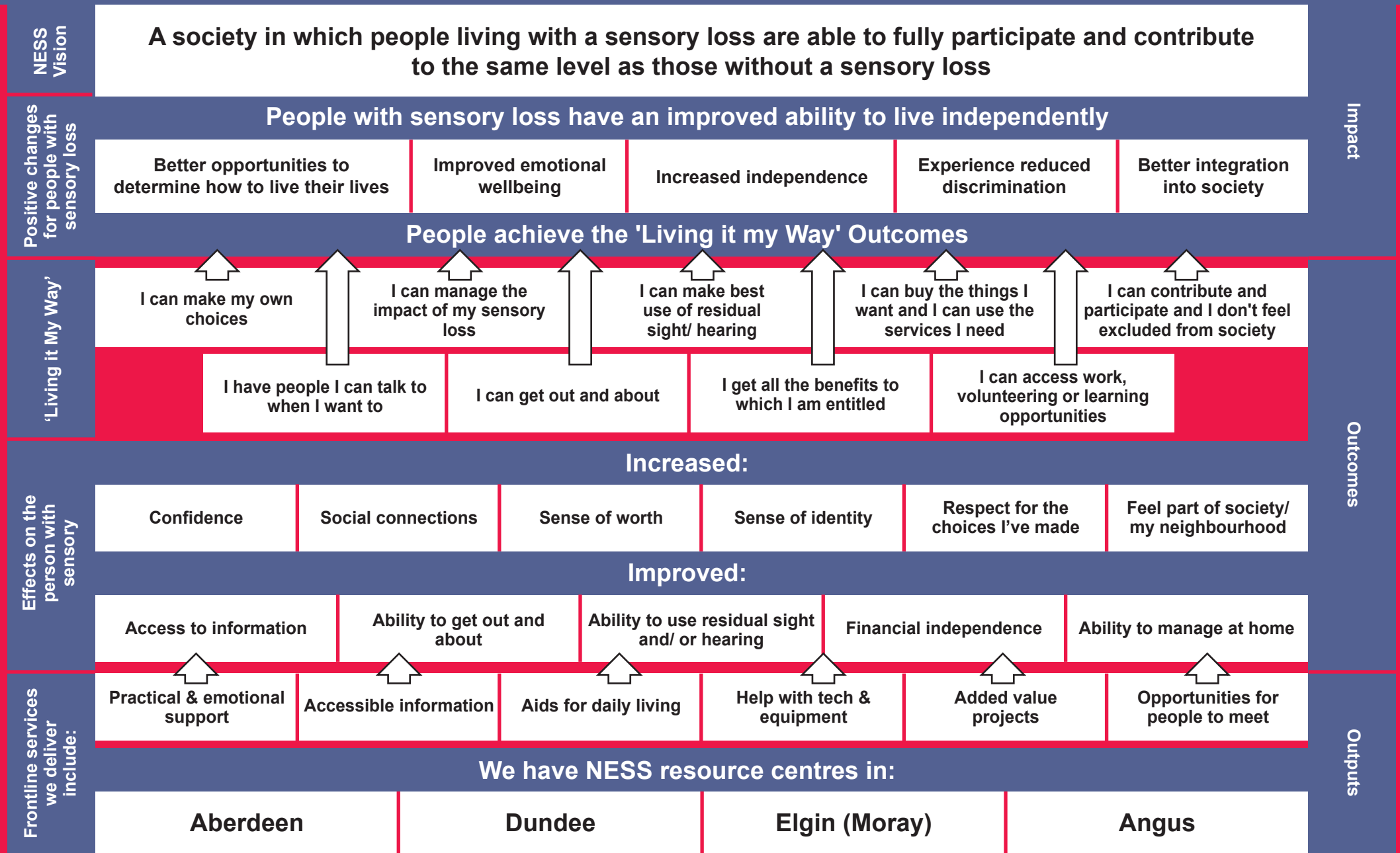
It demonstrates:

- The impact our services can have on the lives of our service users,
- The added value NESS can create from the contributions of our investors,
- The wider impact and influence of NESS in pursuit of our vision, “A society where people with a sensory loss are able to fully participate and contribute to the same level as those without a sensory loss.”

We hope it will inform all stakeholders and interested parties of the impact NESS has upon the population it serves. It helps us to ensure that everything we do is always in pursuit of our mission, Achieving independence for blind and deaf people.



# NESS Theory of Change - Concise Version



**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”