



north east
sensory services

achieving independence for blind & deaf people

Social Impact Report

Third Edition

North East Sensory Services

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Two YPSS youngsters enjoy Zorbing

NESS' Social Impact Report, third edition, follows on from our second edition, published in 2018.

It is a summary document taken from NESS Social Accounts, and covers the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. It aims to demonstrate changes that have occurred because of our activities in terms of:

- Outcomes for individuals we have engaged with,
- How this affects the groups of people we are here to serve, and
- Our contribution towards “making the world a better place”.



“Our Values surround our Mission”

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



Two visitors to our open day in Dundee

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A new six-year strategic business plan was started during this period, due to be published later this year (2023) taking NESS up to our 150th Anniversary in 2029.

The People We Serve

North East Sensory Services (NESS) supports people of any age, in any walk of life, who are living with **significant sensory loss** in the North East of Scotland - from the Moray Firth to the Firth of Tay - and in all its many and varied communities.

The term “sensory loss” covers a broad spectrum of experiences related to loss or impairment of sight and/or hearing:

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

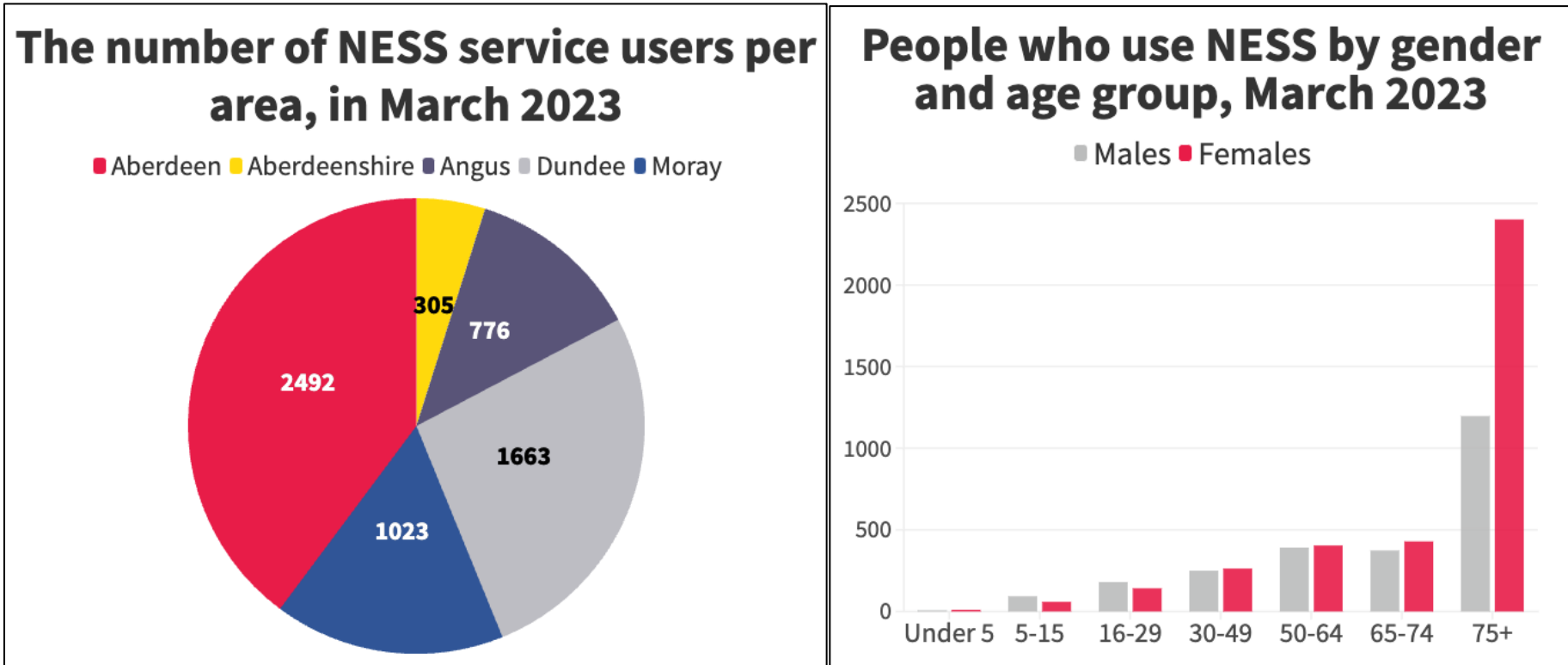
It is classed as “significant”, if it has a major negative impact on their ability to lead a valued independent life. This will undoubtedly mean different things to different people, which is why we offer an individualised, person-centred service, based on people’s needs, wants and preferences.



A volunteer chats with an audio library member

Service User Profile

On 31 March 2023 there were 6,259 people from across the North East on our database. This number has remained fairly constant in the last three years. 3,256 or 52% of them were deaf/ hard of hearing and 3,003 or 48% were visually impaired.



Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision is for “**A Scotland aware of the needs of people with sensory impairment, that includes them as equal participants in community life and offers them the opportunities available to all.**” (“Making the world a better place”).

Our Mission is: “**Achieving Independence for Blind and Deaf People.**”

We try to enable everyone to identify and face their challenges, overcome them and **achieve as much independence as they can**. Everyone’s experiences are different, and everyone will have their own ways of communicating, getting information and dealing with day-to-day situations. Getting the right practical and emotional support as quickly as possible, has been shown to help people adapt more quickly to their sensory loss.

At the heart of our service delivery, is the recognition that each individual has their own requirements of our services, unique to them. We are equipped and able to deliver a range of **flexible person-centered** responses: finding ways to enable people to manage their life with a sensory impairment.

Practical and emotional support, which begins with a specialist assessment of need, is offered to all people newly referred to us and also when they re-engage after a break. NESS’ workers will swiftly assess people in their homes and begin to deliver individualised support and help them identify any aids, equipment and adaptations that can help them regain confidence and stay in control of their lives. Our prompt action can have a life-changing impact on their level of functioning, self-esteem, confidence, and resilience.



At the graduation of one of our Employment service clients.



A YPSS Segway session



Visiting our audio library

NESS' Living it My Way Outcomes

All the people we work with have their own unique challenges. What they wish to achieve, with NESS' support, may be different to what others want. 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, independent lives.

Living it My Way
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.

After we have worked with someone for a while, we look at the outcomes each individual has achieved for themselves. We consider five broad indicators which are derived from our 'Living it My Way' outcomes: independence, social isolation, negative impact of sensory loss, finances/ income and involvement in community/ society.

Indicators:

- Do they look after themselves more independently?
- Are they less socially isolated?
- Have some of the negative impacts of their sensory loss been reduced?
- Has their income/ financial situation improved?
- Has their involvement in the community/ society increased?

Asking these same questions about each individual gives us a coherent picture of our effectiveness: a means of measuring our impact on **the groups of people we are here to serve.**

Practical and Emotional Support – what we said:

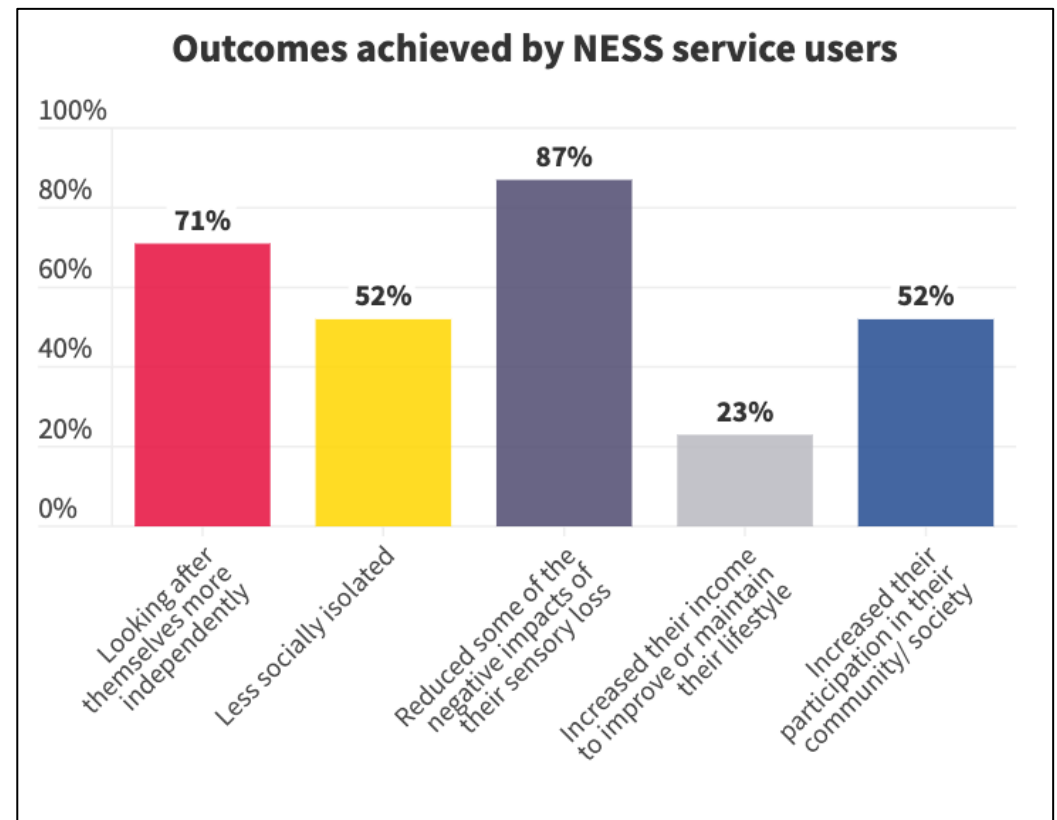
“We visit people in their own homes and use our **specialist knowledge**, experience and insight to enable people with sight and/or hearing loss to be as **independent** as they can be.”

“We help people identify practical solutions to their unique challenges, which are personal to each individual. Our services are delivered with empathy and encouragement by specialist professionals, through a combination of accessible information, assistive equipment and relevant support.”

“We work towards helping them retake control, find **solutions** to their problems and navigate barriers, so they can live fulfilling lives as equal participants in strong and resilient communities.”

Our evaluation data from between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 shows the following:

- 71% are looking after themselves more independently;
- 52% are less socially isolated;
- 87% have reduced some of the negative impacts of their sensory loss;
- 23% have increased their income to improve or maintain their lifestyle;
- 52% have increased their participation in their community/ society.



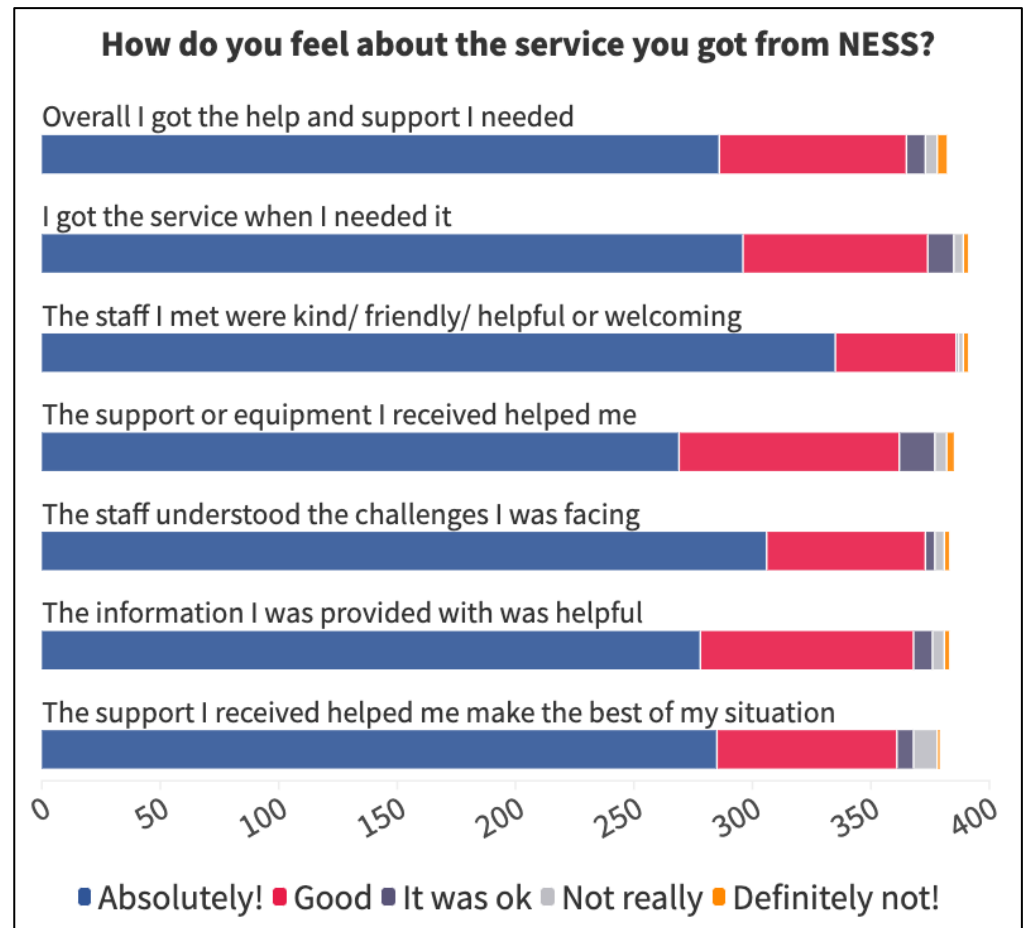
Our Impact – what they said:

Although what we do is important, the effect it has on the people we support is better at demonstrating the impact we have. Who better to tell us than the people we support?

We sent our Service user Satisfaction survey to 937 service users, all of whom had received support from us in the last year. We asked them how they felt about the service they had received.

We sent them out on paper, by email, in Braille, a BSL video version and an audio recording. We were delighted that 396 questionnaires were returned over the month of February 2023.

- 92% said overall, NESS delivered the help and support they needed;
- 95% of people said they got the service when they needed it;
- 98% said the staff they met were kind, friendly, helpful or welcoming;
- 91% of people said the support or equipment was helpful to them;
- 94% said the staff understood the challenges they were facing;
- 93% said the information we provided was helpful;
- 91% said our support helped them to make the best of their situation.



Magic moments

People often tell us how much the things we have done have helped them. More recently, we have become much better at noting down what people say and now we regularly share their feedback among the staff. Here's a selection from **November 2022**

- “Your staff understand. They ‘get’ how hard it is to be deaf. They are polite and kind to me.” Service user.
- “I’ve lived with sight loss for five years. I’ve just discovered you. Thank goodness!” Service user.
- “Having you here is excellent. I felt dependent on my husband. I lost my licence and was stuck. I wanted to use the bus but was too scared and lost confidence. You are helping me get back the skills that match my ‘get up and go’ attitude.” Service user.
- “It is very reassuring to know that when your service gets involved, lots of things happen and are checked; things that might otherwise be missed.... Knowing your workers are involved, means we know that these things will be met. It means we can focus on our part of the support.” Occupational Therapist.
- “The staff are very good to me. They bend over backwards to sort things out and help me feel good.” Service user.
- “It’s the social aspect of meeting people and being able to get help when required.” Service user’s relative.
- “Getting this equipment and knowing there is someone I can contact for support is just great!” Service user.
- “I would not go out if it wasn’t for NESS.” Service user.
- “Groups! I love the groups. Now I can knit with a loom. I never could knit before, and now I make hats! If I stopped, I would have nothing. People understand me here and I don’t feel different.” Service user.



Three of our smiling staff members

Volunteers

NESS is extremely fortunate to have a dedicated army of skilled and willing volunteers to help us with our work. Without them, we would not deliver half of what people currently receive.

Total financial value of volunteers

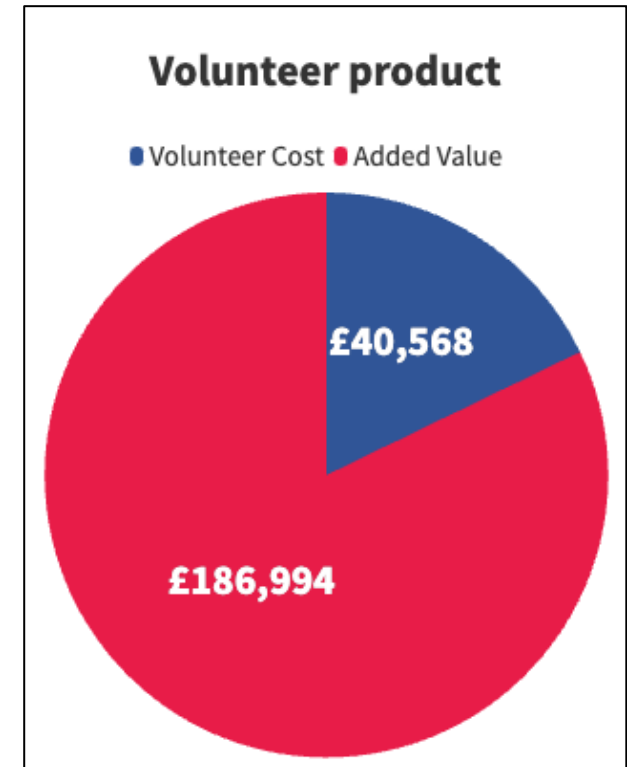
We conducted a Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA). This analysed what tasks our volunteers did, for how much time, and matched it to equivalent paid work at the market wage to produce a notional volunteer wage bill – ‘what we would have to pay people to do the work of our volunteers’. This was £227,562. When we subtract the volunteer costs of £40,568 it produced an added value equivalent of £186,994.

The VIVA ratio: **for every pound we spent on volunteers, we got back £5.61** in the value of the work they did: more than a five-fold return on the organisation’s investment in volunteering.

The VIVA also produced the following results:

- The total number of volunteer hours given to the organisation in the year 2022-23, was **11,026 hours**.
- The full-time equivalent of the total **volunteer hours is 5.85 meaning:**

It would take almost **six additional full-time staff** to do the current work of our volunteers.





Lots of our volunteers came by to our "Hero's thank you lunch and quiz"

Quality and Continuous Improvement

NESS is committed to meeting all its stakeholders' requirements and accounting for its performance in doing so. Our quality control measures, ensure that our performance requirements are being met.

NESS performance requirements are specified in a number of ways, including:

- Service level agreements' output targets and grant awarding agencies' reporting requirements;
- Monitoring service user outcomes;
- Staff development.

NESS undertakes the following quality control measures;

- Individual service review;
- Service user surveys;
- Auditing specific objectives.

The third Social Accounting process, examined the activities of the whole organisation, measured, monitored and analysed its activity based upon the mission, values, and projected outcomes, providing evidence of its impact.

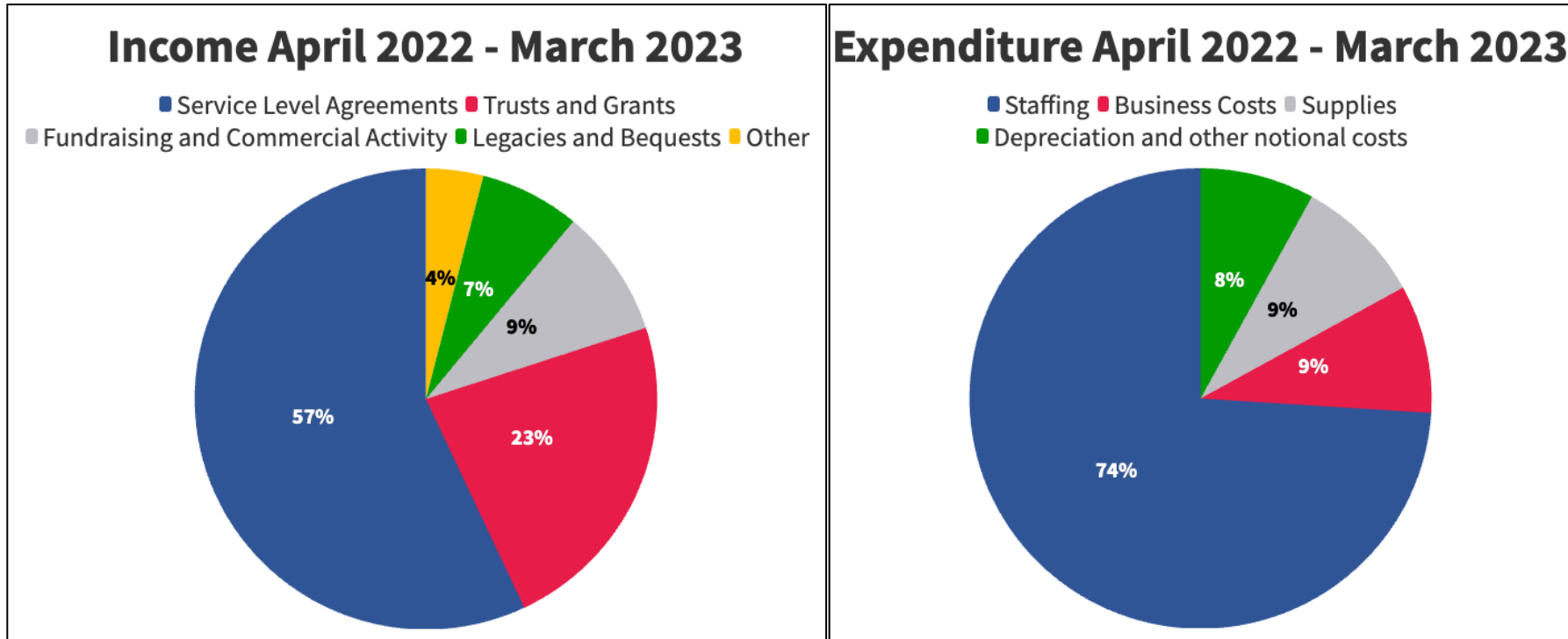
This Social Impact Report summarises some of its key messages.

NESS also wishes to be an organisation that is regarded by its employees as one they are proud to work for, that communicates with them, listens and responds appropriately, that values them and invests in them. In 2022, we again retained the Investors in People (IIP) Gold award, achieving a significantly higher score than last time.

A team member stated, "I know where to go if I need support or help, but I feel totally trusted to get on with the job and it is that trust and belief that motivates me."

Financial Information

As a charity, over the year April 2022 to March 2023, NESS income was £2.5 Million.



NESS' accounts show £2.6 Million expenditure, 74% of which is staffing, and a deficit of 0.1M, approximately 8% of the total. However, this includes depreciation and a notional rent, amounting to £118,700. Neither of these are actual costs but need to be included for accounting purposes. They are represented by the green segment in the second chart.

NESS Theory of Change – A why, how what and where of NESS

Our Mission: Achieving independence for Blind and Deaf people

Indicators

Looks after themselves more independently	Is less socially isolated	Has reduced some of the negative effects of their sensory loss	Has sufficient income to maintain or improve their lifestyle	Participates in their community/ society
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IMPACT

People achieve the “Living it My Way” Outcomes

I can make my own choices	I can manage the impact of my sensory loss	I can make best use of my residual sight/ hearing	I can buy the things I want and use the services I need	I can contribute and participate, and I don't feel excluded from society
I have people I can talk to when I want to	I can get out and about	I get all the benefits to which I am entitled	I can access work, volunteering or learning opportunities	

OUTCOMES

Increased wellbeing

Confidence	Social connections	Self Respect	Decision making	Feel part of society/ my neighbourhood
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Statutory Service Provision

Sight loss register	Practical and emotional support	Rehabilitation and managing vision impairment	Lip reading and managing Hearing loss	Adaptive equipment
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Added Value Services

Practical and emotional support	Accessible information in a variety of formats	Aids for daily living	Help with technology	Opportunities to meet socially
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OUTPUTS

NESS Resource Centres

Office base only

Aberdeen	Dundee	Elgin (Moray)	Friockheim (Angus)
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Our Vision: “A Scotland aware of the needs of people with sensory impairment, that includes them as equal participants in community life and offers them the opportunities available to all.”