

# SENSE, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION

England & Wales · Charity number 289868

## Details

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Other names	THE NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION, S E N S E, SENSE
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	<a href="#">01825301</a>
Registered	1984-07-26
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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## Activities

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**Objects:** 3 ObjectsThe objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:3.1 primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments;3.2 and to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support(together, the "beneficiaries").

**Activities:** Sense exists so that no one who is deafblind or has other complex disabilities is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Across the country, we support children and adults to communicate and experience the world. We provide information and advice, offer a wide range of flexible services and campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, Accommodation/housing, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Amateur Sport
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities

## Geography

- Northern Ireland
- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£101,863,000	£104,175,000	£46,253,000	2956
2024-03-31	£94,976,185	£97,474,231	£48,562,693	2851
2023-03-31	£86,526,714	£90,244,916	£50,760,632	2485
2022-03-31	£82,519,244	£78,214,023	£45,425,557	2557
2021-03-31	£75,228,287	£70,332,977	£32,550,066	2555

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Mark Nicholas Cammies</b>	Chair	2024-12-12
Benjamin Francis Cooper		2022-03-09
Jeremy Christian Larsson		2024-12-12
PHILIP CHARLES ROBERTSHAW		2024-12-12
Simon Terry Jones		2019-12-10
Vivienne Helen Hoskins		2022-03-09

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# Accounts

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# Sense Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2025

Published September 2025

## **Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association:**

Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (Sense), Sense International and Helping Sense Limited

Sense: Registered number 1825301

Registered charity number: 289868



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<sup>1</sup> form the Strategic Report of the Trustees



## Introduction from our Chair

I am honoured to be the new Chair of Sense, having succeeded Dr Justin Malloy in December 2024. Firstly, I would like to thank Justin for his leadership over the seven years he was Chair. As a result of his incredible leadership, as well as that of those other trustees who stood down during the year, Sense has continued to grow and develop during a particularly challenging time. I am delighted to build on Justin's great work at Sense and continue to grow the organisation as a force for positive change. I am fortunate to be working with a great mix of new and experienced trustees on the board to take this work forward.

I must also thank Richard Kramer OBE, who stood down as our Chief Executive in January this year. Richard led Sense since 2018 with such skill and commitment, and he was a great loss to the organisation. However, following a robust selection process, we were very lucky to appoint James Watson-O'Neill as our new Chief Executive who joined us in February 2025. James brings a wealth of senior leadership experience in the charity sector as well as a real passion for the cause, and I know we will continue to grow from strength to strength under his leadership.

There is so much to celebrate looking back at our work over the last year, and so much to look forward to in the year ahead. I am proud to present this report which provides a comprehensive overview of the year at Sense and highlights our achievements across our strategic outcomes, including exceeding our targets in many areas.

In 2024/25 we reached over 5,232 children and families offering early intervention, play services and tailored support, as well as continuing our development of Sense Hubs across the UK, including the completion of a new hub in Belfast. The hub offers day opportunities, a specialist children's nursery, early intervention services, arts, sports, and wellbeing programs, and state-of-the-art sensory rooms. We have helped to combat loneliness through holidays, virtual buddy programs, arts workshops and active lifestyle sessions, as well as continuing our work around awareness and advocacy. And, of course, we continued to support disabled people with complex needs to live independently, pursue their goals and be part of their communities through our accommodation services, day opportunities, community services and our colleges.



Looking to the future, 2025/26 is another exciting year for Sense as we celebrating our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I am particularly excited about the development of our new strategy and Three-Year Plan, which will set out our new vision, purpose and goals for the future.

I look forward to working with you all as we continue to work together towards a world without limits for disabled people with complex needs.

*Mark Cammies*

Mark Cammies  
Chair of Sense



## About Sense

### Our vision and mission

Our vision is a world where no disabled person, no matter how complex their needs, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.

### Who we are

We believe that every disabled person with complex needs should have the opportunity to connect with others and be included in the world. We use our knowledge and expertise to deliver personalised, creative and flexible support at every stage of life, no matter how complex someone's needs.

### Who we support

Sense supports disabled people with complex needs, including deafblindness. From the first weeks of life, through the major milestones of adulthood, we want to ensure disabled people and their families are supported to fully live every stage of their life.

There are 1.6 million disabled people with complex needs in the UK, most of whom need significant or high-level care in their daily lives.

### What we do and how we do it

Sense supports disabled people with complex needs from the first weeks of life, through all the major milestones of adulthood. No matter how complex someone's needs, we provide support in people's homes, in centres and in residential services across the country.

We also offer practical information, advice and support to carers and families, enabling them to build the resilience to thrive, not just survive.

With Sense, children can develop new ways to communicate and play, adults can build confidence and find a place in their community, and families can feel seen, supported and valued.



## Our strategic outcomes: plans and achievements.

### Outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start

Being a parent or carer of a disabled child who is deafblind or who has complex needs can be challenging. In many cases, parents can struggle to communicate and connect with their child, especially if the child expresses themselves in a unique way. Getting the right support, at the right time, can make all the difference to a child's development. It also strengthens and supports families, helping them accept and embrace their future lives.

#### Key achievements

Across all our charitable programmes, Sense reached 5,232 children and their families this year.

We continued to grow the **Sense Early Intervention and Play** service in Birmingham, Bristol, Loughborough and North Wales, offering Connect and Play sessions for 3,560 disabled children with complex needs, aged 0-8 years, and their families.

These services support the vital contribution that free play makes to a child's development. By offering activities ranging from sensory stories to outdoor forest schools, we helped children find new ways to connect, communicate and play.

We continued to deliver the **Sense Toy and Tech** service, which helps parents looking for specialist assistive technology to try before they buy, supporting them to find the right toys and equipment to help their child learn and communicate.

Our service for **multi-sensory impaired (MSI) children and young people** continues to provide tailored extra support for 1,672 children and young people aged 0-25 nationally. This includes specialist one-to-one support at home or in nursery/school, early years groups, family events, parent/carers information and wellbeing sessions, and bespoke training.

The team reached children and families through face-to-face and virtual activities, supporting them to communicate with each other and access education. They also led and



attended professional events across the country to raise awareness and share knowledge of deafblindness and MSI, reaching over 1,163 professionals.

Families had told us they wanted a 'one stop shop' to access support for their children/young people and themselves all in one go, including activities for their children and siblings, information for parents, and a chance to connect with others. This led us to plan our first family conference!

The day was packed with engaging activities for the children and young people we support, including immersive storytelling, crafts, messy play and interactive sessions using resonance boards. Siblings joined together for a fun-filled day, starting with immersive story telling before going offsite on a bell boating adventure. And, while their children were engaged in activities, parents had the opportunity to step back and take some time for themselves through Sense Arts wellbeing activities.

We also established new **Sense Active** events across some of our regions and our 'Summer of Sport' engagement also took place in summer 2024. This was a one-off activity due to the number of sports competitions that took place in 2024 (for example the 'Euros' football championship, Wimbledon, and Paralympic Games) and enabled us to reach and support more new young people.

Families have continued to tell us they appreciate how Sense has supported them to access trips away and events in their communities. The cost of living and extra financial barriers they face would make these trips impossible otherwise. We supported more new children and young people in our **holidays programme** and received excellent feedback from families on the quality of support.



## **Supporting someone to deal with their parents' relationship breakup.**

When the parents of a young person we support were going through an amicable separation, we supported him to understand and navigate the situation.

We developed a social story – a personalised story to help explain the situation – to help him understand things like whose house he would be at and how he could express where he wanted to go. We also included the emotion attached to the situation and reinforced that it's ok to be sad. The story explained it was nobody's fault and he would feel differently in time, as the new normal became routine.

We also worked with the parents and gave them a template for a weekly schedule that used Velcro and laminated pictures so it could be updated. This gave the young person instant and up-to-date information about where he would be and who he would be with during the coming week. They understood the information in this format and it helped him deal with this major life event. In a short space of time, this support helped him show less negative emotion and anxiety, and become much more relaxed.

## **Outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

We believe that everyone has a right to live a fulfilling life and play an active part in their community, including through equal access to work, education and training. With the right support – reflecting people's aspirations and needs – we can ensure no one is left out or unable to fulfil their potential.

### **Key achievements**

Our target for this year was to reach 75 new adults across **services that are commissioned**, for example by local authorities and integrated care boards (ICBs). We significantly exceeded this target, with 132 new adults benefiting from our support, including across our supported living, college, residential care and day services.



We've continued to develop our **Sense Hubs** across the UK and our new hub in Belfast was finished in March. It's bright and airy, with welcoming and inspiring spaces to offer a range of services for disabled people, families, and the wider community. The hub offers day opportunities for disabled adults, where people can try new things and make new connections. It will be home to a specialist children's nursery and is also the base for a new early intervention service for disabled children with complex needs from 0-8 years old, enhancing existing support for deafblind children. There will be a new arts, sports and wellbeing programme offered from the hub itself, as well as out in the community in partnership with local providers. The project attracted over £600,000 of fundraised capital which helped us include state-of-the-art sensory rooms for both children and adults, along with a safe and accessible outdoor play area. There are several fully kitted-out activity rooms, a music room, a living skills kitchen and a technology suite.

### **Supporting a person to understand more about taking his prescribed medicine**

We helped a young man in Supported Living understand more about the medication he was prescribed and the process he needed to follow to take it safely with ongoing support from staff.

The manager of the service was involved in developing a written protocol for the staff team to follow. We also produced versions of the protocol and process in Easy Read and Widgit formats for the young man to follow.

The risk was low, as the goal was simply to support his understanding of the process, while staff still supported him to take his medication. But the benefits for the young man were great. By increasing his understanding, he was able to be more involved in his medication and understand more about his health needs. This helped him take more responsibility for keeping himself healthy, and improved his self-esteem and independence. It also helped support his numeracy and literacy skills and showed his ability to learn at home. In the future, there may be an aspiration for him to take his medication completely independently.



In 2024/25 more people made use of the online resources on the Sense website and we achieved our annual target of 4,000 digital downloads. This is due to the collaborative efforts of our digital marketing team, who are constantly reviewing and improving signposting within the website to ensure easy redirection to the right content.

### **Outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected in their communities**

We know that many disabled people, across all stages of life, feel lonely. This is a very common experience among the people we support. We respond to this challenge by supporting people to build confidence, access new environments, create a sense of connection within their local community and find a route out of loneliness.

#### **Key achievements**

This year we helped people and families combat loneliness, learn new skills and make connections through a range of activities.

We hosted a wider range of **Sense Holidays** than in previous years, creating more opportunities for people and their families to take a break. In all, 40 people benefited from being able to go on a memorable accessible holiday with our support. Our main holiday programme hosted 5 holidays, venturing to Gloucester, North Yorkshire and Blackpool, thanks to 44 wonderful volunteers.

We also worked alongside the Deafblind International Network to enable 6 Deafblind holidaymakers, and their supporters, to visit a four-day event in Scotland. The event brought people together from all over Europe, including Germany, Norway, Denmark and Ireland.

We supported 250 **siblings and young carers** through our services. Based on feedback from young people and parents, we continued to offer monthly wellbeing sessions, facilitated by qualified counsellors. Specific group sessions were aimed at teenagers, with sessions ranging from revision tips to CV writing. Siblings were supported to develop peer-to-peer friendships, and we ran another successful residential trip for 29 siblings,



supported by Forward Carers. We also continued to run our sibling service at Sense Hub Loughborough.

The **Sense Virtual Buddy** programme created opportunities for 166 people to connect virtually, learn new skills, have fun and form fantastic friendships.

Our **Arts and Wellbeing programme** expanded significantly in Year 2 of our National Portfolio grant from Arts Council England, delivering 351 days of workshops (our target was 259) and reaching 360 new disabled people with complex needs.

We delivered 27 public events focused on music, dance, visual arts and wellbeing activities. These engaged 5,960 audience members – almost double our annual target – and showcased the impact of Disability Arts in Care. This work continues to embed inclusive arts practice across our services and raise awareness through artist-led events and cultural partnerships.

Throughout 2024-25 we delivered 2,347 **Sense Active** sessions to support individuals in their journey toward more active lifestyles, with a combined attendance of 21,808 across all sessions. We reached over 2,000 individuals, including 1,073 new participants who joined this year. In addition, we delivered 35 workshops to equip 517 sports professionals with valuable knowledge and practical skills. These achievements mark a meaningful step toward our goal of reaching 5,000 people by 2027, reinforcing our commitment to long-term community impact.

Our progress continues to be strengthened by our involvement in Sport England's System Partners work, which supports innovation, collaboration, and the delivery of inclusive physical activity opportunities across communities.



Our **employment programme** supported 442 disabled people and employers, including providing access to training, volunteering and work preparation.

### **Helping someone to be independently mobile.**

When a resident of one of our supported living services – who was used to walking independently with a cane – fell in the local community, her injury meant she had a long period of staying at home. Afterwards, she no longer wanted to go to her usual shops and community venues without a member of staff to support her. She would often become distressed whilst out, especially when faced with steps and kerbs.

We supported her to complete a mobility assessment. It seemed she had lost confidence in her own ability to find her way around, even though she had known her local area for many years. As well as her injury, some of the places she used to go to had closed, including the bank she went to to withdraw her own money.

With a lot of support and encouragement, as well as some bespoke mobility training, she began to use her cane more confidently. We also supported her to re-establish old mobility routes and create new ones, for example to her new bank.

After regaining confidence in her cane and routes, her self-esteem recovered and she started to access her local community independently again. This has also meant she continued to be physically mobile, which may have been at risk without the encouragement to stay independent and active.



## Helping someone to meet others

We all want to find that 'someone special' in life and 'J' is no different. For years they got out and about in their community, meeting people and experiencing life. Feeling they wanted to take things further, they asked their home manager if they could try speed dating.

No-one in the home had tried anything like this in the past, but the home manager had a Sense Individuality, Sexuality and Relationships Advisor to call on for support.

'J' brought a trusted member of their home's team to sessions with the advisor, to talk through the details. We researched local opportunities, gathered information and made plans. This included supporting them to fill out the application forms and pay fees, as well as learn how to use Google Maps to plan the route, research car parking, and plan their schedule for the day, including what time they'd have a shower, eat and leave the house. They had a trial run along with their trusted support to test out all the plans and timings, and to learn about the layout of the venue.

A lot of activities took place to help them explore what happens during speed dating sessions, how they would communicate with the other participants and the selection process on the day. They were also supported to explore what qualities and interests they were looking for in their ideal person, and to learn about feelings and emotional resilience to guard against potential disappointment or rejection.

They headed off on their exciting adventure, had a lot of fun and handled the situation with great skill, in part thanks to the support of their chosen member of staff who had been involved consistently in the whole process. They had great fun, enjoyed their evening and returned with lots to talk about.

## Outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action

Sense has been standing up for disability rights for 70 years. We support disabled people and their families to fight for change on a local and national level.



## Key achievements

We carried out a lot of work towards our goal of becoming a **Disability Confident Leader**, with the accreditation being awarded in early 2025/26. Becoming a Disability Confident Leader means not only meeting a high standard of inclusive employment practices, but championing them publicly. It demonstrates that we have taken steps to recruit, retain and promote disabled talent, while influencing others to do the same.

We launched a new **campaigning and influencing** strategy during 2024/25, which contributed to seeing a steady base-level increase in the number of people that say they have heard of Sense.

We successfully launched our **volunteer strategy** in 2024/25 and achieved significant progress on key priorities. We remain committed to making volunteering more impactful, accessible and engaging, and we're working to ensure our 1,900 volunteers, and those who support them, have the tools and resources they need.

Our new strategy is guiding us towards improving the volunteer experience and developing new volunteer opportunities, as well as supporting trading to deliver sales growth. As part of the launch, we held sessions for our people to find out more about the main objectives and answer any volunteering questions. Our volunteers now have access to a new portal where they can access a range of discount codes, online vouchers and cashback. We've also made the Headspace App available to Virtual Buddy volunteers, allowing them access to an incredible range of resources, such as mindfulness and meditation tools to support mental wellbeing. We're pleased with the uptake from volunteers and believe these resources will help our volunteers reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance their overall wellbeing.

## Plans for 2025/26

### Looking to the future

Throughout 2025/26, we'll continue to deliver our services focused on the four outcomes outlined in this report. However, we are also using 2025/26 to develop our future strategy and three-year plan.



To shape both of these, we've listened carefully to around 1,500 people – including disabled people with complex needs, family carers, supporters, other charities and our people. Their insight and experiences have guided us every step of the way.

What we have heard is clear. We must:

- Clarify our purpose and direction
- Involve disabled people with complex needs more meaningfully across our work
- Make braver, more strategic decisions about how we use our resources
- Deliver greater, more visible impact for disabled people with complex needs and their families

Many disabled people with complex needs and their families have told us the support they receive from Sense has been 'life-changing'. But they also shared a stark contrast. Too often, in other areas of life, the support simply isn't there. Barriers are put up at every turn and many feel isolated or alone.

The chance to be in control, make friends, live a long and healthy life, try something new, feel included or travel freely remains out of reach for far too many. We've heard difficult and distressing stories of abuse and discrimination. We've heard about lives shaped by growing financial hardship, as vital benefits are reduced and the rising cost of living continues to hit disabled people with complex needs hardest. Many told us that things have never felt more difficult.

From these conversations came a clear and urgent call for change. For a social movement that breaks down barriers, shifts public attitudes, and transfers power to disabled people with complex needs.



Disabled people with complex needs told us they must be heard and listened to. This means greater choice and control over every aspect of life: who supports them, where they live, and how decisions are made.

The feedback we have received will be central to shaping our new strategy and our bold, inclusive vision for the future. Our board of trustees will approve our new strategy at their September meeting and we'll use the second half of 2025/26 to use this to develop our new three-year plan. The feedback we've received will be central to shaping it, as it reflects the knowledge, experiences, and aspirations of the people who know Sense best. The new three-year plan will be approved by trustees in March 2026, ready for implementation in 2026/27.

## **Sense International: performance against objectives for 2024/25**

Sense International supports children and adults with deafblindness in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. People with deafblindness in the countries we work in are more likely to live in poverty and be unemployed, with lower educational outcomes than other people with disabilities. They face multiple barriers, including lack of access to healthcare, education, vocational training and opportunities to participate in their community. Lack of accessible information and communication makes it extremely difficult for them to voice their issues.

Sense International had three strategic objectives for 2024/25:

- **Innovate:** People with deafblindness are included in national systems.
- **Inform:** People with deafblindness, and the people who support them, have more information, skills and knowledge.
- **Influence:** People with deafblindness are recognised in laws, policies and budgets.

### **Innovate**



We innovate and show how people with deafblindness can be included in national systems such as healthcare, education and vocational training. We work in partnership with governments, partner organisations, parents and others, and take a life cycle approach, identifying children with deafblindness as early as possible. Then we support them throughout their life, from education, through to employment, and family and community life.

This year, **55,770** children were screened for deafblindness across our countries. **6,007** children with deafblindness were supported to access education. **1,565** young people were supported with vocational training or opportunities to earn across our eight countries.

## **Inform**

We share information and train people with deafblindness, their families and carers, health-workers, educators and other professionals, communities and decision-makers, so that people with deafblindness get better support.

Across all countries, **17,373** people were trained to support people with deafblindness.

In February 2025, we successfully launched the [Global Deafblindness Resource Hub](#), co-hosting the global launch with Google at the Google Discovery Accessibility Centre. The launch was attended by 180 participants from 20 countries in person and online. The Resource Hub, funded by Nelumbo Foundation, is a platform that brings together – for the first time – a range of resources from across the eight countries we work in. It offers a ‘one stop shop’ for people with deafblindness and their support networks to understand and connect with information, local signposted services and networks. We continue to develop the Resource Hub with accessible information and resources, and currently have resources in 7 languages – English, Nepali, Romanian, Spanish, Bangla, Hindi and Swahili.

## **Influence**



We raise our voices to ensure the promises and commitments of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other international human rights legal instruments, are realised for people with deafblindness. Together with our partners and collaborators – including organisations of people with deafblindness – we advocate for change in policy, programmes and services. Sense International **India** contributed to the civil society report on accessibility, commissioned by the Supreme Court of India, and its note on access to education for people with deafblindness was included in the final report submitted to the Supreme Court. More than 117 people with deafblindness participated in the consultation, providing inputs on their access to schools.

## **Sense International: plans for 2025/26**

In 2025/26, we will continue to implement the refreshed 5-year strategy we put in place in 2022/23. We'll deliver work on early intervention, inclusive education and vocational training and livelihoods, alongside advocacy, training and knowledge sharing, so that people with deafblindness are meaningfully included in systems and societies. A few of our priorities for 2025/26 include:

- Sense International will begin work on developing our new strategy for 2027-28 onwards. This will include how we can become more locally led as an organisation, with a view to ensuring that power, agency and ownership of the work we do sits with local partners, people and the communities we work with. Consultations with local and UK teams and trustees, as well as local communities are planned in 2025/26.
- In Tanzania, we will begin a five-year programme called 'Collective Action on Disability Rights', funded by the Norwegian government through Atlas Alliance and Signo Foundation. The programme aims to empower persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs) to claim their rights, improve their lives, and hold governments accountable for implementing inclusive policies in line with the UN CRPD. We'll focus on improving access to quality inclusive pre-primary, primary and secondary education for girls and boys with disabilities.



- We will further strengthen our Global Inclusive Education programme, ensuring more children with deafblindness have access to education, and people with deafblindness have access to information and resources through our Global Deafblindness Resource Hub. In 2025/26 we look forward to the local launches of the Hub in all our countries.
- We will be closing out our FCDO-funded Disability Inclusive Development and Inclusive Futures programme, as the programme comes to an end. We'll be publishing and sharing the insights and experience we gained from almost 7 years of implementing inclusive education, business and livelihoods programmes.

## Quality, inclusion and safeguarding

### Quality

CCQ 'Good' ratings have reduced from 94% (2023) to 90% (2024) to 84% (2025), which may be an indication of the new CQC assessment framework and not having been inspected for a number of years; 6% of services are rated Outstanding and 10% are rated Requires Improvement. We endeavour to continue to learn lessons from previous inspections and through addressing trends in our internal audits. The number of CQC registered services has also reduced from 52 to 49. There was one closure, one transferred to another provider, and one merged into another service.

Our services in Northern Ireland and Wales remain 'assured' by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) respectively.

Our independently-chaired **Quality Board** continues to meet quarterly to review evidence of quality assurance across our services and agree recommendations from quality audits that are carried out by the compliance team.

There is an annual schedule of **monthly compliance and focused audits**, which are completed by the operations managers. The audits are analysed by the compliance team and identified trends are shared and addressed with the Head of each operational region. In some cases, online meetings are used to share experience and discuss the identified trends and lessons learned.



Over the last year, we have introduced an **Operations Support Network**. Online sessions provide an opportunity for networking and information sharing between quality and operations teams. There is a mix of mandatory upskilling sessions and voluntary spotlights sessions, with guest speakers from across our operational services on a variety of topics. These have included professional curiosity, safeguarding, and delegated healthcare tasks.

Incidents of behaviour continue to be recorded and analysed centrally using digital systems. This enables our continuous focus on **positive behaviour support** and steers effective decision-making, based on the six core strategies of the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN). This is now part of Sense Behaviour Management policy and positive behaviour support training continues to be delivered to front line staff. Maybo remains the training provider in England, Wales and parts of Northern Ireland, and MAPA is delivered to a small number of staff in one home in Northern Ireland by the trust's request.

We continue to invest in **reducing restrictive practice** and have funded a place on the RRN Leadership in the reduction of restrictive practices. The Quality and Practice manager was one of the first 50 people in the country to complete this and the learning is being used to inform our positive behaviour support strategy.

After the success of the pilot of the **Capable Environment Standards Audit Tool** (to assess both the quality of provision and possible causes of behaviours of concern), our operational services identified areas of improvement and things to celebrate. The audit is now being rolled out across our wider operational services.

## Inclusion

The **Sense User Reference Group (SURG)**, made up of disabled people with complex needs who provide feedback on our services, had a vacancy which has been filled. The group continued to meet virtually and in person. They talked to local police about keeping safe in their home and the community, spoke to the strategic lead about their lived experience to inform the Sense strategy, and discussed climate change and moving house. The group also shared ideas for the Sense 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary events during 2025.



We've expanded our team of **Experts by Experience (EXE)** to four experts. The team have interviewed people we support from across our accommodation services, supported quality audits and attended Quality Board meetings, as well as being involved in stakeholder panel interviews for new Directors across Sense, and a leadership team day. The experts have also worked in partnership with our practice, media and campaigns, recruitment and policy teams. Feedback from the experts and the teams they have worked with is available on request.

**The output from Working Together for Change (WTFC)** (part of our yearly feedback process) was shared to the strategic leads across Sense. The collation and analysis of the information gave us a clear picture of what is working and what is not. The key themes to emerge and be discussed will be merged with the output of the Capable Environment Standards Audit Tool (see the section on Quality) and used to build action plans for 2026.

## Safeguarding

Our independently chaired **Safeguarding Board** continues to meet regularly to review policies, processes and procedures. It also makes recommendations, including monitoring levels of training and awareness across the whole of Sense. Our compliance team supports with safeguarding queries, concerns and issues that are raised across our operational services.

Our ongoing commitment to the principles of **Making Safeguarding Personal**, has led us to:

- Implement care file notes used in colleges, for our wider operational services. This enables us to analyse any low-level recurring concerns and raise safeguarding referrals if required.
- Increase partnership with the Ann Craft Trust, attending their annual conference in November and quarterly safeguarding network meetings.
- The Fairer Futures project, our partnership with **Vamos Theatre**, who delivered workshops for two groups of people supported by Sense on the topic 'Understanding Abuse'.
- Involvement in the National Safeguarding Network's fifth national Safeguarding Awareness Week, which took place in November 2024 focusing on 'Working in



Partnerships'. Sense provided an overview and keynote speech on the Fairer Future project to over 100 professionals and others attending the Ann Craft AGM.

- Receive increased queries or requests for support through our safeguarding portal on the Sense website.
- Delivery of an online facilitated workshop on professional curiosity, attended by over 120 Sense employees (see the section on Quality).

## Fundraising

So much of our work would be impossible without our supporters, and the amazing people that have donated time and money, fundraised, or left money in their Will for Sense. Last year, the generosity of our supporters meant we raised £15,870,000 for the work of Sense and Sense International. This was thanks to:

- **243** supporters who left us **£3,905,970** through special bequests to remember Sense in their Will. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and thanks to their loved ones.
- **1,063** further people who enquired about leaving a gift in their Will, after seeing our TV and online advertising.
- **1,154** people signed up for a new regular gift through our successful face-to-face fundraising activity.
- Over **18,000** new people who gave a gift following our campaigns and appeals on TV, in newspapers and magazines, and online.
- **Over 800** people who ran, cycled and trekked for Sense, raising over **£1,100,000**.
- **124** people chose to fundraise through swimming, bake sales, head shaves, donations in lieu of birthday or anniversary gifts and more, raising **£52,000**.
- **Over 300** fundraisers either setting up an in-memory tribute page or organising a funeral collection, collectively raising **£63,000**.
- **130** Sense shops that took part in four fun weeks of fundraising to raise **£75,000**.
- **148** local businesses and groups and associations that kindly donated to us raising **£127,000**.



## **Our commitment to fundraise responsibly**

Maintaining the trust of our supporters is critical – that is why honesty and transparency are at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to following best practices in fundraising and marketing. We're members of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising and registered with the Fundraising Regulator, whose Code of Practice we follow.

We adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements and ensure that our policies, guidelines and processes are regularly reviewed. We have strict guidelines about fundraising from vulnerable people and we never put pressure on anyone to donate.

In 2024/25, we worked with four external professional fundraisers to support our fundraising work. We closely monitor our supplier partners and those that fundraise on our behalf to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We work extremely hard to ensure supporters and the public have a positive experience of Sense, but we recognise we don't always get it right. You can find our complaints policy on the Sense website ([Our complaints policy - Sense](#)) – we take all complaints and concerns seriously and value the feedback this provides.

Over the last year, our supporter services team received 79 complaints (2023/24 – 75 complaints). We always respond quickly to requests to change the way we contact people, and we ensure that our supporters' personal details are managed respectfully and securely. We also review our data management procedures regularly.

During the reporting period, we received 54 requests through the Fundraising Preference Service, asking us not to send fundraising requests and these were removed from our mailing lists. No complaints were made to the Fundraising Regulator about Sense during this period.

If you would like to talk to us about fundraising, please contact us at: [supporterservices@sense.org.uk](mailto:supporterservices@sense.org.uk) or 0300 330 9257.



## Our volunteers

- In 2024/25, our 1,900 volunteers continued to play a vital role across Sense, supporting our shops, services, activities and virtual programmes with dedication and passion.
- In October 2024, we launched our new volunteer strategy, which focuses on three key objectives: enhancing the volunteer experience, developing new roles, and supporting trading to increase sales growth. This has already begun to create a more inclusive culture, with volunteers more actively involved in our work.
- We've expanded the range of volunteer opportunities available, introducing new roles such as gardening volunteers and administrative support. This has made it easier for more people to get involved in ways that reflect their interests and skills.
- In our shops, over 1,400 volunteers continue to make a significant contribution by driving sales, raising awareness of Sense, and building connections in their local communities. Over the past year, we've also worked to simplify and improve the recruitment process and role structures within retail, helping more people to join and thrive.
- Sense Virtual Buddying remains a powerful way to reduce loneliness and isolation. This year, we made important improvements to the programme, focusing on making it more efficient and providing a better experience for volunteers.
- Alongside this, we began work to improve how we gather and use volunteer data, and continued to embed our recruitment systems and training to strengthen consistency and support across all volunteer involvement.



## **Our people**

In 2024/25 our talented and dedicated people, comprising 2,890 employees and 1,900 volunteers as of 31 March 2025, continued to ensure that our services remained safe and secure. Everyone, from those directly involved in looking after the people we support, to those raising funds in our shops or working in office functions, played a vital role.

### **How we supported our people**

Last year we continued to develop our wellbeing offering, with our mental health first aiders now established and supporting our people across Sense.

In direct response to our employee engagement survey, we delivered a different benefits package for all employees, together with an improved Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). We also introduced a mortgage advice service in addition to a new voluntary Health Care Cash Plan and refreshed Cycle to Work Scheme.

We invested in our managers through the introduction of people management workshops, to provide them with upskilling and refresher opportunities to support their teams well.

### **Recruiting new talent**

We continue to use digital campaigns to raise awareness of vacancies at Sense and encourage a diverse range of applications, as well as using traditional advertising and job boards to attract candidates.

Our applicant tracking system continues to enable faster, more efficient recruitment and welcoming of new employees. Over 350 hiring managers are now trained to use it.

### **Engaging and communicating with our people**

Our intranet, Sense Engage, continues to evolve and be further embedded into our work culture and practices. Last year, we used it to share news, team information, policies and links to our systems. It helps our people find contact information for colleagues, comment on blogs or articles and access our employee benefits.



## **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

Our four employee diversity networks – disability, ethnic diversity, LGBTQ+ and wellbeing networks – continue to provide a safe space for our people to meet, as well as promote an inclusive culture.

We've continued to use staff stories to raise awareness of cultural dates and religious festivals, and 'toolbox talks' for our teams to facilitate and have open conversations, as well as providing signposting information.

We've recruited an accessibility lead to provide practical support, advice and guidance for managers and disabled people, to enhance accessibility for employees in Sense

We've improved our data collection for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data from 74% of our people to 85%. This has provided better insight and understanding of protected characteristics and associated trends within our workforce, informing reporting such as our annual pay gap review.

The implementation of systems and processes continues to enhance our ability to identify and analyse trends within our data. These improvements have been instrumental in achieving reductions in our pay gaps.

In addition to our statutory requirements for reporting our gender pay gap, we continue to report on disability and ethnicity pay gaps for our people:

- Gender - Mean: 7.11% (down 1.71% from 8.82%)
- Disability - Mean: 0%. As an organisation we are proud to continue our yearly performance of reporting a favourable -1.57% Disability Pay Gap
- Ethnicity - Mean: 7.3% (down 0.5% from 7.8%)

More detail and a fuller explanation of our pay gaps are given in our pay gap reporting, published on our website - [Diversity pay at Sense 2024 - Sense](#).

## **Chief executive/senior management pay**

The salary of the chief executive is set and reviewed by the Nominations and Remuneration committee, which is a subcommittee of our Board of Trustees. The benefits



available are in line with those of other employees. The review of the pay of the chief officer's is carried out, and set, in line with the overall pay award for all other employees.

## The governance of Sense

During the year 2024/25, and up to the approval of the annual report and financial statements by the Board, there have been 14 Trustees, some of whom were in post for part of the year. Trustees are also (for the purposes of company law) Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. Their names are set out within the section 'The Sense Group' later in this report.

Under the current Articles, Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees and can serve two terms of four years.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) usually meets four times a year and Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings.

### Sub-committees

The Board is supported by three committees: Finance and Audit, Engagement and Nominations and Remuneration. Each committee has written Terms of Reference, which are reviewed as necessary and included in the Governance Handbook. The Board appoints the members of the committees annually and receives either the minutes from their meetings, or reports of their activities, with any recommendations.

New Trustees receive a comprehensive induction pack. An appropriate induction plan is also put in place, which involves meetings with senior staff, internal and external training as necessary, and visits to Sense's services as appropriate.

### Chief officer's group

The Board delegates day-to-day operational management of the organisation to the Chief Executive. The broad areas of delegation, for which the Chief Executive is accountable, have been agreed by the Board and are set out in the Governance Handbook.



To ensure these responsibilities are discharged effectively, the Chief Executive is responsible for appointing, managing and developing senior staff to take direct responsibility for these areas, and for putting in place appropriate reporting and assurance mechanisms.

The chief officers' group meets regularly and includes the chief executive, chief financial and commercial officer, chief fundraising and marketing officer, chief operating officer, chief people officer, chief social change officer, chief strategy and governance officer and chief technology officer, as well as the chief executive of Sense International.

## The Charity Governance Code

The Charity Governance Code specifies that the boards of large charities should publish a brief statement in their annual report on how they use the code under the seven principles.

In 2024 the Charity Governance Code steering group undertook public consultation to make sure the Code remains relevant and useful, and a new version is expected to be launched later in 2025. The code covers seven principles:

- 1. Organisational purpose**
- 2. Leadership**
- 3. Integrity**
- 4. Decision-making risk and control**
- 5. Board effectiveness**
- 6. Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- 7. Openness and accountability**

We have detailed our approaches to 'Organisational purpose' (Page 7 and 32), 'Leadership' (Page 34), 'Integrity' (as noted within our Governance Handbook) and 'Openness and accountability' within the information provided within this report. To note the three outstanding principles:



#### **Principle 4: Decision making, risk and control**

As detailed on page 29, Sense has a robust governance structure. Led by the needs of the organisation, Trustees meet quarterly as a Board and, in addition, will sit on various other committees to provide oversight and decision making within the remit of each committee. Otherwise decisions will be taken as recommended actions to the full Board of Trustees.

#### **Principle 5: Board effectiveness**

The last internal Board review, which took place in 2021, concluded that the Board operates very efficiently, creating a positive and transparent working atmosphere and making decisions well as a team.

In the period 2024/25, four Trustees were recruited, and a skills review followed. In early 2025, the Board and its committees reviewed their Terms of Reference and will complete further recruitment in 2025/26 as necessary to address any skill gaps. It is also planned to conduct a full governance review in 2026/27, as part of the new three-year plan.

#### **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

The Board is committed to having a diverse membership, with a reasonable balance across areas including race, gender, age, involvement of disabled people with complex needs or their family members, and people from various professional backgrounds.

In 2024/25 we advertised the vacancies for Trustees in a variety of forums to attract representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and specifically noted the importance of recruiting Trustees with a lived experience of disability. Two disabled Trustees were appointed as a result.

The Board continues to receive updates on the progress of the EDI strategy and, by extending the software package for recruitment to volunteers, we will be gathering data for all volunteers – including Trustees – in the future.



## The Sense Group

### Working together

The Sense Group comprises two discrete legal entities: Sense and Sense International, in addition to the subsidiaries as set out below.

Both Sense and Sense International are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee in England and Wales, with their own Boards and Memorandum and Articles. The objects of both charities are similar, in referring to supporting people who are deafblind and have sensory impairments.

Our shared vision is a world where no one who is deafblind or has complex needs is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Each organisation runs its own activities to work towards this vision.

Information about Sense International is given below, but additional details can be found in its own annual report and financial statements.

Sense is the trading name of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association, which is a registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 289868) and a company limited by guarantee (company number: 01825301). It is governed by its Articles of Association.

Sense works primarily in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the Corporate Trustee of the Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham). It is the sole member of Sense International and Sense4Enterprise Limited and also holds 100% of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited. The Objects approved in 2021 are set out in Article 3 as follows:

The objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:

3.1 - primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments; and



3.2 - to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support

(together, the "beneficiaries").

**Sense International** is a registered charity (charity number 1076497), a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986) and is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association. It works on a global basis, raising the needs of people with deafblindness and working with partner organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Sense is the only member of Sense International.

Sense has the following subsidiaries:

**Helping Sense Limited** is Sense's trading company (company number: 02214430). It is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association, and its main activity is the sale of goods through Sense's charity shops. Any profits from its activities are donated to Sense.

**Sense4Enterprise Limited** (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities.

**The Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham)** is a registered charity (charity number: 528908). The Charity Commission granted a linking order, permitting its activities to be reported within Sense's report without the need to file its own separate annual report and financial statements. It is governed by its trust deed, but does not operate in its own right. This subsidiary did not trade in the year.

This is the consolidated annual report and financial statements for all the Sense organisations. Sense International publishes its own annual reports and financial statements that describe its activities and finances in more detail.



## **Sense Group Trustees and senior staff**

Members of the Board from 1 April 2024 to the present

**Dr Justin Molloy** (Chair) (Resigned 12 December 2024)

**Mark Cammies** (Chair)

**Saeed Ahmed** (Resigned 20 August 2024)

**Ben Cooper**

**Vivienne Hoskins**

**Simon Jones** (Treasurer)

**Mythily Katsaris** (Resigned 5 February 2025)

**Jeremy Larsson** (Appointed 12 December 2024)

**Alicia McDonnell** (Appointed 12 December 2024)

**Phil Robertshaw** (Appointed 12 December 2024)

**Steve Simper** (Appointed 12 December 2024, resigned 19 February 2025)

**Brian Symington**

**Nathan Taylor**

**Mark Westwell**

During this year there were three female and eleven male Trustees/Directors.

### **Sense chief officers' group**

**Emma Evans** – chief people officer

**Jack Lowman** – chief social change officer

**Kavita Prasad** – chief executive of Sense International



**Dave Rutt** – chief technology officer

**Catherine Still** – chief finance and commercial officer

**James Watson-O'Neill** – chief executive

In the year there were three female and three male chief officers.

## Charity information and professional advisers

### Registered address - Sense and Sense International

101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG

Tel: 0300 330 9250

Email: [facilities@sense.org.uk](mailto:facilities@sense.org.uk)

Websites: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

[www.senseinternational.org.uk](http://www.senseinternational.org.uk)

### Sense Northern Ireland

Sense Family Centre

The Manor House

51 Mallusk Road

Newtownabbey

County Antrim, BT36 4RU

Tel/text: 028 9083 3430

Email: [nienquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:nienquiries@sense.org.uk)

### Sense Cymru

TouchBase Wales

Caerphilly Business Park

Van Road

Caerphilly, CF83 3ED



Ffôn/tel: 0300 330 9280

Testud/text: 0300 330 9282

Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)

**Sense:** Registered number 1825301

**Registered charity number** 289868

## Professional advisers

### Independent auditors

HaysMac LLP

10 Queen Street Place, London EXC4R 1AG

### Bankers

National Westminster Bank PLC

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JA

### Solicitors

Wilson's Solicitors LLP

Alexandra House

St John Street

Salisbury SP1 2SB

Trowers & Hamblins LLP

3 Bunhill Row

London

EC1Y 8YZ

### Insurance advisers

Willis Towers Watson

8 First Street

Floor 6

Manchester, England M15 4RP



## Section 172 statement

Sense is required by the Companies Act 2006 to make an annual statement about how Directors have 'promoted the success of the company', having regard to the following matters set out in Section 172 of that Act:

### **a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term**

This is a fundamental consideration in relation to any major decisions made by the Board. Last year the Board continued to focus heavily on the national increase in the cost of living and the effects it has had on the people we support and how we operate.

### **b) The interests of the company's employees**

Last year we continued to develop our wellbeing offering to our people, with our mental health first aiders now established and supporting our people across Sense.

In direct response to our employee engagement survey, we delivered an updated benefits package for all employees, together with an improved Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). We also introduced a mortgage advice service, in addition to a new voluntary Health Care Cash Plan and refreshed Cycle to Work Scheme.

We invested in our managers through the introduction of people management workshops to provide them with upskilling and refresher opportunities to support their teams well.

### **c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

Our key stakeholders are the people we support across all our services and their families. We regularly communicate with our suppliers. Other important stakeholders are our supporters and volunteers. We continue to work with other charities in our sector and the Board and Engagement sub-committee are regularly updated about these relationships.

### **d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**

One of the key aims of our services is to enable the people we support to feel part of their local communities. Our trading arm also builds strong community links through our shops,



which act as important ambassadors for Sense. The shops hold fun weeks, enabling members of the public to take part in activities and to learn more about Sense and the people we support. The shops also sell items which would otherwise go to landfill – an important contribution to the environment (and in line with Sense’s Environment Policy).

#### **e) The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

The good reputation of Sense, both of our services and our business relationships, is critical to our long-term future. Our services are scrutinised not only by our quality team, but by the Quality and Safeguarding Boards, which both have an external Chair and members, with direct input from Trustees. We also have a Whistleblowing Policy in place, giving access to an independent external organisation. The Finance and Audit sub-committee has responsibility for monitoring the impact of the Policy.

#### **f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company**

All members of the board receive the same information as each other and have access to all papers, minutes and background information. All committees provide an update to each board meeting to ensure that all their discussions and decisions are transparent and open. In addition, all board members have an open invitation to attend any committee meeting they are not a member of.

### **Internal financial controls**

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, financial and otherwise, in place. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A strategic plan and an annual budget approved by the Board. A number of matters are specifically reserved for the Board’s approval.
- Regular consideration of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and the Board.



- The development of policy documents covering all major strategic and operational activities. The executive team reviews these with appropriate regularity and consultation.

## Anti-bribery policy

Sense has an anti-bribery policy, which sets out the definition of bribery and makes it the responsibility of all employees and Trustees to prevent and report any bribery issues. If necessary, this can be through Sense's Whistleblowing procedure, which provides a number of possible contacts, including an external organisation.

## Financial review of Sense 2024/25

### Summary of the year

In common with many charities, conditions were challenging for Sense in 2024/25, with a particular pressure on trading margins, which had a significant effect on the overall financial performance. As a result, the group made a loss of £2,310k in the year. This is consistent with the loss of £2,193k recorded in 23/24, with reserves reducing further as a result.

As in previous years, costs rose as a direct result of the increase in National Living Wage from £10.42 to £11.44 (9.8%) and this affected all areas of activity. We were able to offset this increase to a limited extent with fee increases from commissioners for social care services, but this was much more difficult in our shops and programmes and inevitably this affected operating profit.

Whilst increased costs affected the whole organisation, sales in our shops were lower year on year. This is unprecedented at Sense and added to the challenges of finding additional income to offset the additional costs. In response to these pressures, restructuring activity was undertaken in order to improve efficiency and secure saving for the future, and this included some shop closures. We started the year with 137 shops and ended it with 132.

However, income from fundraising was substantially higher than the previous year, which meant that Sense was able to support, not only all planned programme activity, but also speak up clearly in the national disability rights debate.



Despite the financial pressures, Sense continued to deliver services in line with the strategy and began to invest in technology for the future, with expenditure on a new fundraising customer relationship management (CRM) system and investment in digital and data talent.

Whilst another year of losses is not helpful, the Group has still increased reserves overall in the last four full years following the pandemic, despite increasing costs.

Sense Group £ks	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Income	82,521	86,527	94,976	101,863	365,881
Expenditure	(78,099)	(90,191)	(97,169)	(104,173)	(369,640)
Net income / (loss)*	4,422	(3,664)	(2,193)	(2,310)	(3,759)
Movement into / (out of ) reserves**	12,875	5,337	(2,193)	(2,310)	13,695

\*before pension liability/cessation movements

\*\*including pension liability/cessation movements

The Group remains free of borrowings or long-term debt and has an extensive property portfolio. Having exited the legacy pension fund in 2023, there is also no longer any liability attached to pension obligations.

The loss in the year, combined with capital investment in buildings and technology, led to a decrease in cash in the year, with the Group finishing on £6.6 million (2024: £10.1m), with a stable cash position.

## Income

Income generated rose in the year by £6.9m to £101.9m (2024: £95.0m).

Income £ks	2023/24	2024/25	Movement
Donations and legacies	£13,977	£15,870	£1,893
Charitable activities	£64,406	£69,953	£5,547
Trading	£15,750	£15,251	-£499



Investment Income	£471	£297	-£174
Other income	£372	£492	£120
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£94,976</b>	<b>£101,863</b>	<b>£6,887</b>

- Income from charitable activities increased by £5.5m, mainly as a result of inflationary fee increases secured to offset the increase in National Living Wage.
- Donations and legacies income increased as a result of higher income from philanthropy and grants, partially to support the purchase of our new Hub in Belfast, which will be operational during 2025.
- Trading income reduced slightly in the year as a result of lower sales and some shop closures, which took place towards the end of the year. Year-on-year sales reduced across our shop estate.
- The decrease in investment income relates to lower cash balances, and the increase in other income reflects an increase in rental income received.

## Expenditure

Expenditure increased by £6.7m to £104.2m (2024: £97.5m).

Expenditure £ks	2023/24	2024/25	Movement
Raising funds	£6,399	£6,855	£456
Charitable activities	£73,677	£78,746	£5,069
Trading	£16,584	£17,735	£1,151
Other	£813	£839	£26
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£97,473</b>	<b>£104,175</b>	<b>£6,702</b>

This increase was largely driven by the increase in National Living Wage, which – at 9.7% – accounted for £5.1m of the overall cost increases. The majority of the additional cost was incurred in charitable activities, as that is where the majority of colleagues work. Costs in trading also increased because of restructure activity, as well as the increase in employment costs.



## Balance sheet

The consolidated balance sheet shows a reduction in reserves of £2.3m to £46.2m (2024: £48.5m), with restricted reserves increasing by £0.6m to £3.7m (2024: £3.1m).

There was an increase in fixed assets of £1.3m to £37.1m (2024: £35.8m), which reflects the investment in capital projects in the year of £5.2m. Of these, the major projects were investment in our fundraising CRM to support more effective income generation and the purchase of our Belfast Hub, which will open for service delivery during 2025.

With working capital consistent year on year, the operating loss, coupled with the capital investment, drove a reduction in cash of £3.5m to £6.6m (2024: £10.1m). Operating activities generated cash of £1.2m in the year (2024: £0.04m), with a small positive movement on working capital and increased depreciation charges linked to capital investment.

## Reserves

Total reserves reduced in the year to £46.3m, down £2.3m from £48.6m, with restricted reserves increasing from £3.1m in 2024 to £3.8m in 2025. Of the £5m designated in March 2024, £1.0m was for technology investment, which has been spent on the fundraising CRM, and £1.2m was reserved specifically for the Belfast Hub, which has also been spent. In year activity to support further development in services and technology has been budgeted and will be funded from unrestricted reserves.

The Trustees regularly review free reserves to ensure there are adequate funds to support all the activity Sense Group undertakes. This review reflects the need to maintain a considerable property estate in order to continue to provide the high quality of services to the people we support, to fund investment projects to grow services and to ensure an adequate contingency is maintained for unforeseen events.

In March 2025 Trustees have agreed to release all designated reserves (2024: £5 million) in anticipation of agreeing our new strategy which will identify new areas for investment



and development.

We also consider unforeseen risks when setting a minimum level of free reserves. We define free reserves as unrestricted reserves, minus fixed assets, minus any designated reserves. Free reserves at March 2025 were £5.3 million (2024: £4.6 million), reflecting the investment made in fixed assets offset by releasing designated reserves.

<b>Sense Group Free Reserves £ks</b>	<b>Mar 25</b>	<b>Mar 24</b>
<b>Unrestricted Reserves</b>	<b>42,494</b>	<b>45,437</b>
Minus fixed assets	(37,150)	(35,843)
Minus designated reserves	-	(5,000)
<b>Total Free Reserves</b>	<b>5,344</b>	<b>4,594</b>

After considering various scenarios and the risks attached to each of our income streams, the Trustees consider that minimum free reserves of £4.5 million are required (2024: £4.2 million). Trustees therefore consider our reserves to be in excess of our minimum target.

### Going concern

The closing position at March 2025, detailed in the financial statements for the year, combined with forecasts based on agreed activity over the near period, shows that Sense will be able to fund foreseeable operational and capital expenditure. It remains the case that Sense has eliminated all long-term debt and significant liabilities, including the pension liability. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and the risks that might threaten those forecasts.

Sense Group provides a letter of support to Sense International, which pledges to provide financial support to Sense International if it is unable to operate as a going concern and to settle its liabilities as they fall due. This is reviewed as part of the going concern analysis.

Together with our risk management policies, the strong reserves position and no indebtedness allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and that therefore it is appropriate to continue to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.



## Ethical investments

Where relevant, Sense aims to hold ethical investments that are consistent with its charitable objectives.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for the management of risks to the chief executive and chief officers' group.

The chief officers' group is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk, including those identified on departmental risk registers, and for reporting on this to the Finance and Audit committee. The chief officers' group is also responsible for developing risk mitigation strategies and controls, and for implementing actions to minimise or reduce risk to acceptable levels. The risk register is reviewed each month by the chief officer's group, and the departmental risk registers are reviewed by each chief officer for their areas. The chief officers' group agree which department-specific risks should be included on the corporate risk register.

The Finance and Audit committee is responsible for overseeing the establishment and maintenance of good practice in this area, and for reporting to the Board at each of its meetings when the corporate risk register is reviewed.

The major risks currently on the risk register, along with the principal controls applied to those risks, are as follows:

<b>Uncertainty/risk</b>	<b>Possible consequences</b>	<b>Controls in place</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sense systems are compromised by a Cyber attack</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sense systems are unavailable, impacting on service delivery.</li><li>• Loss of significant financial sums through deception or extortion.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investment in cyber security systems</li><li>• Independent Chief Information Security Officer</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is severe reputational impact, with regulatory and contractual implications.</li></ul>	<p>support from expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal cyber security training</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trading fails to generate sustainable income</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trading becomes loss making and financially unsustainable</li><li>• Costs of exit impact adversely on Sense's finances</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost reduction restructure implemented</li><li>• Programme of shop closures agreed</li><li>• Strategic review of trading completed</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safeguarding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals put at risk of harm</li><li>• Significant reputational risk</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Independently chaired Quality &amp; Safeguarding Board reports to Trustees</li><li>• Significant internal structure with a Head of Safeguarding in place</li><li>• Digital services safeguarding policy in place</li><li>• Compulsory internal training for all staff in place</li></ul>



## Energy and carbon report 2024/25

### Environmental Impact

In 2024-25, Sense generated 2,632.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e of carbon emissions; an increase of 210.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from the previous year.

Gas, electric and oil (scope 1&2) emissions increased because of a bigger national building floor area (57,719m<sup>2</sup>), but also more accurate metering data, meaning Sense has a truer reflection of energy consumption. To date, 95% of our meters have been upgraded to smart meters, and we remain committed to transitioning the remaining units. The supporting associated software will provide Sense with enhanced capability for energy consumption analysis.

Sense has successfully submitted the compliance notification for ESOS Phase 3 before 5 June 2024, undertaking a thorough evaluation of the recommendations, and implementing actions where deemed appropriate and cost-effective to do so. Some of these innovative activities include:

#### **Touch Base South-East in Barnet**

Replacing the old boiler plant with new, highly efficient condensing boilers, including insulating exposed pipework, a new burner management system (BMS) and associated controls.

#### **Loughborough College**

Installation of new efficient condensing boilers and associated thermostatic controls, separating hot water systems from low-temperature hot water systems and providing energy training to staff.

#### **Kings Norton Old Coach House and Otterhayes House in Devon**

The installation of new photovoltaic solar panel systems.



## Other comments

Company transport emissions fell by 6.1% for diesel vehicles and 12.9% for petrol vehicles, as a result of a reduced fleet from 174 vehicles to 158 vehicles. Scope 3 grey fleet emissions reduced by 7% to 196.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, because of less travel across our fixed locations. Overall, Sense is looking for innovative ways to reduce vehicle travel, including the use of tablets to conduct virtual audits, without the need to physically visit sites as often.

In the next financial year, Sense is completing further energy audits on our freehold assets to identify sustainability opportunities. We are committed to changing all our electricity meters to enable comprehensive analysis of power consumption, thereby supporting well-informed decision-making in relation to future energy reduction initiatives. The installation of these meters ensures that Sense is strategically positioned well in advance of the Market-wide Half-Hourly Settlement (MHHS) transition, scheduled for implementation in 2027.

This report allows Sense to comply with the UK government regulations, while promoting responsible environmental stewardship, transparency in reporting, energy efficiency and carbon reduction. The table below show Sense's carbon emissions, compared to the previous financial year:



		Period 2024/25			Period 2023/24			Variance 2024/25 v 2023/24				
Scope - GHG Protocol Corporate												
Energy/Activity	Standard	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	tCO2e Varn %	kWh Varn %	
<b>Scope 1</b>												
Combustion of Natural Gas	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	4,768,519	966.6	36.71%	4,260,094	766.8	33.25%	508,425	199.8	26%	11.90%	
Combustion of Oil	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	359,569	93.4	3.55%	310,241	77.6	3.36%	49,328	15.8	20%	15.90%	
Transport Own Vehicles (Diesel)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	1,656,903	430	16.33%	1,763,840	423.3	18.36%	-106,937	6.7	2%	-6.10%	
Transport Own Vehicles (Petrol)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	570,060	132.1	5.02%	654,140	143.9	6.24%	-84,080	-11.8	-8%	-12.90%	
<b>Scope 1 - TOTALS</b>		<b>7,355,052</b>	<b>1,622.10</b>		<b>6,988,315</b>	<b>1,411.60</b>		<b>366,737</b>	<b>210.5</b>		<b>5.20%</b>	
<b>Scope 2</b>												
Electricity	Scope 2 (Energy Indirect)	4,601,749	814.5	30.94%	3,301,599	683.7	29.65%	1,300,150	130.8	19%	39.40%	
<b>Scope 3</b>												
Transport - employee-owned vehicles business travel	Scope 3 (Other Indirect)	730,222	196.1	7.45%	920,882	210.7	9.14%	-190,660	-14.6	-7%	-20.70%	
<b>TOTALS (Gross)</b>		<b>12,687,023</b>	<b>2,632.70</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>11,210,796</b>	<b>2,306.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,476,227</b>	<b>326.8</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13.20%</b>	

In calculating the emissions, we have used the UK Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, conversion factors 2025:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2025>

## Methodology

Sense has compiled this report for the accounting period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, following the UK HM Government 'Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance June 2023'. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard.

Energy data has been gathered from the following sources:

- Gas combustion – Supplier invoices, including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings
- Electricity - Supplier invoices, including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings.
- Transport – Own Fleet – Finance records for litres of fuel (petrol & diesel) purchased.



- Staff vehicle grey fleet - Finance records for claimed mileage from each vehicle. As the diesel / petrol split was unknown, a weighted average was applied.

## Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees of Sense

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group, and of the incoming resources and application of resources – including the income and expenditure – of the charitable company/group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2019);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions, disclose with reasonable



accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group, and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In accordance with Section 418, Directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each Director in office at the date the Directors' report is approved, that:

- so far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company and the group's auditors are unaware; and
  - they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee, in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees' Report, which includes the strategic report as required by Company Law, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by;

*Mark Cammies*

Mark Cammies

Chair

Date: 23 September 2025



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# Independent auditors' report to the members of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

## Report on the audit of the financial statements

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### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Consolidated statement of financial activities, Consolidated balance sheet, Company balance sheet, Consolidated summary income and expenditure account, Consolidated cash flow and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's and parent charitable company's net movement in funds, including the income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the **group's** ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.



Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the 'Report of the Trustees', and the 'Introduction from our Chair' sections within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Report of the Trustees have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit



## Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement **set out on page 49**, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the group and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the reporting requirements of the Charities SORP, FRS 102 and Companies Act 2006. We considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, and consider other factors such as income tax, payroll tax and sales tax.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journal entries to revenue and management bias in accounting estimates. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:



- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Steve Harper (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
For and on behalf of HaysMacLLP, Statutory Auditor Date:

29 September 2025

10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1AG



## Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2025 £000s	Total 2024 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	11,315	4,555	-	15,870	13,977
Charitable activities	1	68,860	1,093	-	69,953	64,406
Trading	1	15,251	-	-	15,251	15,750
Investment income	2	293	4	-	297	471
Other income	3	492	-	-	492	372
<b>Total income</b>		<b>96,211</b>	<b>5,652</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>101,863</b>	<b>94,976</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Raising funds	4	6,850	5	-	6,855	6,399
Charitable activities		74,200	4,546	-	78,746	73,677
Trading		17,735	-	-	17,735	16,584
Other		839	-	-	839	813
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>99,624</b>	<b>4,551</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>104,175</b>	<b>97,473</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	5	2	-	-	2	304
<b>Net (decrease) / increase before transfer between funds</b>		<b>(3,411)</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,310)</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>
Transfers between funds	17	468	(468)	-	-	-
<b>Net (decrease) / increase after transfer between funds</b>		<b>(2,943)</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,310)</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward	17	45,085	3,126	352	48,563	50,756
Net (decrease) / increase in funds	17	(2,943)	633	-	(2,310)	(2,193)
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>42,142</b>	<b>3,759</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>46,253</b>	<b>48,563</b>

The net income of unrestricted funds is analysed between the general fund and designated funds.



## Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	31 March 2025 £000s	31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	10	37,150	35,843
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>37,150</b>	<b>35,843</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		499	666
Debtors	12	10,659	11,253
Investment	13	-	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		6,610	6,144
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>17,768</b>	<b>22,063</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	14	(8,649)	(9,319)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>9,119</b>	<b>12,744</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>46,269</b>	<b>48,587</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	15	(16)	(24)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>46,253</b>	<b>48,563</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
General fund	17	42,142	40,085
Designated funds	17	-	5,000
Restricted funds	17	3,759	3,126
Endowment fund	17	352	352
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>46,253</b>	<b>48,563</b>

The notes on pages 66 to 86 form part of these financial statements.

The surplus / (deficit) of the parent charity before consolidation was (£2,612K) (2024:£2,503k).

The financial statements on pages 55 to 86 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

*ST Jones*

Simon Jones

Treasurer

Registered company number 1825301



## Company balance sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	31 March 2025 £000s	31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	10	37,142	35,823
Investments	11	30	30
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>37,172</b>	<b>35,853</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		499	666
Debtors	12	10,462	11,368
Investments	13	-	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		5,653	5,098
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>16,614</b>	<b>21,132</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	14	(8,567)	(9,154)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>8,047</b>	<b>11,978</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>45,219</b>	<b>47,831</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)		-	-
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>45,219</b>	<b>47,831</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>45,219</b>	<b>47,831</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>			
General fund	17	42,021	39,755
Designated funds	17	-	5,000
Restricted funds	17	2,846	2,724
Endowment fund	17	352	352
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>45,219</b>	<b>47,831</b>

The notes on pages 66 to 86 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 55 to 86 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 23rd September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

*ST Jones*

Simon Jones  
Treasurer

Registered company number 1825301



## Consolidated summary income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Income	101,566	94,505
Total expenditure of operations	(104,175)	(97,473)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	(2,609)	(2,968)
Gain/(Loss) on disposal of tangible fixed assets	2	304
Interest receivable and similar income	297	471
<b>Net (expense)/income for the year</b>	<b>(2,310)</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>

## Consolidated cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Cash flows from operating activities			
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>39</b>
Cash flows from Investing activities:			
Interest received		297	471
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets		169	574
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(5,163)	(5,607)
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(4,697)</b>	<b>(4,562)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities:</b>			
Repayments of borrowing		-	-
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period (including short term deposits)		(3,534)	(4,523)
Change in cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period (including short term deposits)		10,144	14,667
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (including short term deposits)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6,610</b>	<b>10,144</b>



# Accounting policies of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association

## Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Accounting and Reporting for Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, which is applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act from presenting its individual statement of financial activities.

## Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

## Preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis

The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and have also taken account of the risks that might threaten the expected position. Trustees have reviewed the forecasts in the light of severe and plausible downsides such as loss of retail income or inadequate fee increases to cover increased costs and conclude that revenue and capital expenditure will be covered even if such adverse circumstances occur. Trustees have also reviewed the risk register in detail during the year including a review of risk mitigation strategies. Given the risk management policies and strong reserves position, the Trustees believe that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report. The Trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties with regards to the going concern assumption therefore it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.



## Group financial statements

These financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiaries: Sense International, Helping Sense Limited, and Sense4Enterprise Limited.

### Income recognition

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income, and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Fees and allowances receivable for residential care and similar services are accounted for in the period in which the service is provided.

Trading income represents income from the sale of goods to customers and is recognised at the point of sale, which is when the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to the customer, and the income can be measured reliably.

Legacy income is recognised on a receivable basis or when it is probable that legacy income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants received in advance which include donor-imposed conditions that specify a time period in which the expenditure of resources can take place are accounted for as deferred income and recognised as a liability.

Donations are recognised as income when received, except when the income is related to major events, when income is deferred until the event takes place. This is most notable in the case of the London Marathon which takes place in April with any income received in advance of the event deferred. Non-cash donations, other than goods donated for sale through shops, are stated at an estimate of their value to the charity.

### Expenditure

All expenditure, including any irrecoverable VAT, is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.



The cost of raising funds represents the cost of organising fundraising events and activities. Trading costs cover the operating costs of the charity's shops. The cost of charitable activities includes all expenditure directly relating to the objects of the charity. Support costs are apportioned to the relevant charitable activity based on salary costs incurred, income raised or another relevant basis of allocation.

Governance costs (comprising internal and external audit, strategic costs and Trustees' expenses) are included in support costs.

## **Cost Allocation**

Support costs not attributable to a single activity are allocated or apportioned on a basis consistent with identified cost drivers for that cost category. Cost drivers utilised include head count, direct costs, and estimation and judgement is exercised in applying cost drivers to cost categories.

## **Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended use. Company policy is to capitalize items above £500 in cost.

Freehold land is not depreciated.

Assets under construction are included under the relevant fixed asset category in the note. These assets appear at cost to date and are not yet subject to depreciation.

## **Intangible assets**

Amortisation is provided so as to write off the cost of the assets in equal instalments over the estimated useful life of the asset. The amortisation rates used to achieve this are:



Software : 25% per annum

## Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful economic lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold property	2%
Short leasehold properties and long leasehold improvements	Over the remaining life of the lease
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Motor vehicles	25%

## Leases

Operating lease rentals are expensed in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

## Stock

Stock relates to new and second-hand goods purchased for sale through the shops, valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Donated goods and Sense merchandise are valued at nil as their intrinsic value is immaterial.

## Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when an obligation arises to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

## Provisions - Dilapidations

Provision is made for dilapidations in respect of leasehold properties, principally charity shops. The provision reflects an estimate of the costs to make good the leased property at the expiry of the lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. On expiry of a lease, and if we are exiting the property, any expenditure in excess of the accumulated provision is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activity.



## Pension costs

The Group operates defined contribution schemes for all staff. Contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), a multi-employer defined benefit scheme, are accounted for as a defined contribution scheme and are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

## Fixed assets: subsidiary undertakings

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost and written down to their realisable value if there has been a permanent diminution in value.

## Foreign currency

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date.

Exchange differences are recognised within net income/(expenditure).

## Allocation of funds

**General funds** represent unrestricted funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

**Designated funds** are those that have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes as detailed in the funds note.

**Restricted funds** are funds that must be used in accordance with specific instructions imposed by the donors, or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. Where allowable and directly attributable, the relevant costs of administering and delivering the restricted activity are charged to the fund.

**Endowment funds** represent assets that must be held permanently by the charity, principally properties. Any capital gains or losses arising on sale of those assets' forms part of the fund. Depreciation of endowed property is charged against the fund.



Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

## **Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## **Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash held in current accounts, petty cash, and short-term highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## **Financial Instruments**

Sense has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors and accrued income. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors and accruals.

## **Investments**

Investments include cash held on deposit for terms of between three months and one year.

Sense had no investments at March 2025 (March 2024: £4 million in deposit accounts)

## **Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Specific bad debts are recognised and provided for as appropriate.



## Principal accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of these accounting policies, management is required to make judgments, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates, and the estimates, along with their underlying assumptions, are continually reviewed.

Legacies have been accounted for on an accruals basis. Accruals are made for pecuniary legacies that were notified at the year-end but not yet received and residuary gifts where the estate has been finalised but the final amount due can be estimated with some certainty. Accruals at the year-end amounted to £847k and sums received as at June 30th were £760k.

The dilapidations provision reflects an estimate of the costs to make good the leased property at the expiry of the lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. This amounts to £1,057k at March 2025 (March 2024: £953k).



# Notes to the financial statements of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, for the year ended 31 March 2025

## 1. Income

<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>11,960</b>	<b>9,763</b>
Restricted	<b>4,380</b>	3,264
Unrestricted	<b>7,580</b>	6,499
<b>Legacies</b>	<b>3,910</b>	<b>4,214</b>
Restricted	<b>165</b>	-
Unrestricted	<b>3,745</b>	4,214
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,870</b>	<b>13,977</b>

<b>Charitable activities</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Care and Support Midlands	<b>14,392</b>	13,572
Care and Support East	<b>13,577</b>	12,556
Care and Support South	<b>15,669</b>	14,714
Care and Support North	<b>11,055</b>	10,339
Care and Support Northern Ireland	<b>3,679</b>	3,334
Care and Support Wales	<b>2,905</b>	2,212
Education and development programmes	<b>7,657</b>	6,585
International programmes	<b>961</b>	956
Arts and wellbeing programmes	<b>3</b>	10
Holidays and volunteering	<b>37</b>	126
Adult specialist services	<b>9</b>	-
Children's specialist services	<b>9</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,953</b>	<b>64,406</b>

Income from Donation and Legacies includes grants received for a specific purpose which have been spent entirely on that purpose as follows:

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Sense	<b>1,909</b>	1,850
Sense International	<b>960</b>	960
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,869</b>	<b>2,810</b>



## 1. Income (cont'd)

<b>Trading</b>	<b>2025 £000s</b>	<b>2024 £000s</b>
Sale of Goods	14,374	14,843
Gift Aid	740	740
Fundraising	87	132
Rent Received	50	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,251</b>	<b>15,750</b>

## 2. Investment income

	<b>2025 £000s</b>	<b>2024 £000s</b>
Bank interest	297	471

## 3. Other income

	<b>2025 £000s</b>	<b>2024 £000s</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Miscellaneous income	492	372

Miscellaneous income rental of office and conference space income at Sense Touch Base Pears and Pentonville Road.

## 4. Expenditure 2024/25

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Direct Costs £000s</b>	<b>Apportioned Support Costs £000s</b>	<b>2025 £000s</b>
Fundraising	6,540	315	6,855
Trading	17,692	43	17,735
TouchBase Pears	661	6	667
Care and Support Midlands	16,678	1,383	18,061
Care and Support East	12,616	1,290	13,906
Care and Support South	14,385	1,481	15,866
Care and Support North	10,247	1,113	11,360
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,527	378	3,905
Care and Support Wales	2,893	296	3,189
Education and development programmes	2,548	666	3,214
International programmes	2,848	99	2,947
Arts and wellbeing programmes	1,156	88	1,244
Holidays and volunteering	507	51	558
Adult specialist services	64	6	70
Children's specialist services	1,192	122	1,314



## 4. Expenditure 2024/25 (cont'd)

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2025 £000s
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,713	151	1,864
Quality assurance and development	1,120	128	1,248
Other	172	-	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,559</b>	<b>7,616</b>	<b>104,175</b>

### Analysis of apportioned support costs 2024/25

Activity	Facilities £000s	Management £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Governance £000s	Comms £000s	2025 £000s
Fundraising	18	16	95	103	2	81	315
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43
TouchBase	-	-	2	2	-	2	6
Care and Support Midlands	79	70	417	452	7	358	1,383
Care and Support East	74	65	389	422	6	334	1,290
Care and Support South	85	75	447	484	7	383	1,481
Care and Support North	64	56	336	364	5	288	1,113
Care and Support Northern Ireland	22	19	114	123	2	98	378
Care and Support Wales	17	15	89	97	1	77	296
Education programmes	38	34	201	218	3	172	666
International programmes	-	92	-	-	7	-	99
Arts and wellbeing programmes	5	4	27	29	-	23	88
Holidays and volunteering	3	3	15	17	-	13	51
Adult specialist services	-	-	2	2	-	2	6
Children's specialist services	7	6	37	40	1	31	122
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	9	8	45	49	1	39	151
Quality assurance and development	7	6	39	42	1	33	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1,934</b>	<b>7,616</b>



## 4. Expenditure 2023/24

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2024 £000s
Donations	6,089	310	6,399
Trading	16,542	43	16,585
TouchBase Pears	482	9	491
Care and Support Midlands	15,028	1,365	16,393
Care and Support East	11,477	1,174	12,651
Care and Support South	14,345	1,513	15,858
Care and Support North	9,389	1,026	10,415
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,062	322	3,384
Care and Support Wales	2,297	230	2,527
Education and development programmes	2,547	534	3,081
International programmes	2,453	145	2,598
Arts and wellbeing programmes	1,191	92	1,283
Holidays and volunteering	962	89	1,051
Adult specialist services	81	9	90
Children's specialist services	1,079	113	1,192
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,652	149	1,801
Quality assurance and development	1,120	121	1,241
Other	433	-	433
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,229</b>	<b>7,244</b>	<b>97,473</b>

### Analysis of apportioned support costs 2023/24

Activity	Facilities £000s	Management £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Governance £000s	Comms £000s	2024 £000s
Donations	20	14	98	99	2	77	310
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43
TouchBase	1	-	3	3	-	2	9
Care and Support Midlands	88	62	432	434	9	340	1,365
Care and Support East	76	54	371	373	8	292	1,174
Care and Support South	98	69	479	481	10	376	1,513
Care and Support North	66	47	325	326	7	255	1,026
Care and Support Northern Ireland	21	15	102	102	2	80	322
Care and Support Wales	15	11	73	73	1	57	230
Education programmes	35	24	169	170	3	133	534
International programmes	-	103	-	-	42	-	145
Arts and wellbeing programmes	6	4	29	29	1	23	92
Holidays and volunteering	6	4	28	28	1	22	89
Adult specialist services	1	-	3	3	-	2	9
Children's specialist services	7	5	36	36	1	28	113
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	10	7	47	47	1	37	149
Quality assurance and development	8	6	38	38	1	30	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>2,276</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>7,244</b>



## 5. Net gain/ (loss) on sale of tangible fixed assets

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Net gain / (Loss) on sale of tangible fixed assets	2	304

## 6. Net (decrease) / increase in funds

The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Audit fee – Group	85	138
Audit fee – Subsidiaries	16	8
Auditors – Subsidiary tax review fees	9	9
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	3,690	2,703
Operating lease rentals	5,332	4,960

## 7. Employee remuneration

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Wages and salaries	64,114	59,915
Social security costs	5,044	4,523
Pension costs - defined contribution schemes	2,580	2,456
Pension costs - defined benefit scheme (see note 9)	73	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,811</b>	<b>66,945</b>

The average monthly number of employees – excluding volunteers – was 2,956 (2024: 2,851).

Employees earning over £60,000 fell into the following bandings:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,000 - £70,000	21	19
£70,000 - £80,000	10	7
£80,000 - £90,000	1	1
£90,000 - £100,000	2	3
£100,000 - £110,000	3	3
£110,000 - £120,000	2	1
£150,000 - £160,000	1	-
£160,000 - £170,000	-	1



## 7. Employee remuneration (cont'd)

Pension contributions for these employees were as follows:

	2024 £000s	No.	2023 £000s	No.
Defined contribution schemes	93	35	54	11

The aggregate remuneration of the 8 key management personnel (2024: 8) listed in the Trustees' Report, was £854,699 (2024: £831,502) before pension contributions of £68,870 (2024: £61,016), and National Insurance contributions of £107,906 (2024: £104,706).

## 8. Remuneration of members of Trustee Board

No Trustees received any remuneration during the year (2024: £nil).

Four Trustees (2024: One) was reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and duties directly related to their duties as Trustees. Costs reimbursed were £982 (2024: £204).

## 9. Pensions

The Group provides defined contribution pension schemes for current employees.

In addition, the Group has ten employees who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The TPS is a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. Since the Group is unable to identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme, contributions to the TPS are accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

## 10. Redundancy

During the year, the charity undertook a restructuring process to align with its operational and strategic priorities. As a result, redundancy costs of £224,000 (2024: £nil) were incurred in respect of 50 redundancies across the organisation. These costs are included within staff costs in note 7.



## 10. Tangible assets

Group	Freehold Property £000s	Long leasehold improvements £000s	Short leasehold improvements £000s	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s	Motor vehicles £000s	Intangible Asset £000s	Total £000s
<b>Cost</b>							
At 1 April 2024	27,729	4,508	5,527	24,364	3,258	440	65,826
Additions	1,377	-	215	2,692	167	712	5,163
Disposals	-	-	(108)	(563)	(191)	-	(862)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>29,106</b>	<b>4,508</b>	<b>5,634</b>	<b>26,493</b>	<b>3,234</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>70,127</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>							
At 1 April 2024	5,225	1,004	2,680	18,354	2,720	-	29,983
Charge for the year	507	104	575	2,241	263	-	3,690
Disposals	-	-	(98)	(415)	(183)	-	(696)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>5,732</b>	<b>1,108</b>	<b>3,157</b>	<b>20,180</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,977</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>							
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>23,374</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>2,477</b>	<b>6,313</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>37,150</b>
At 31 March 2024	22,504	3,504	2,847	6,010	538	440	35,843

Company	Freehold Property £000s	Long leasehold improvements £000s	Short leasehold improvements £000s	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s	Motor vehicles £000s	Intangible Asset £000s	Total £000s
<b>Cost</b>							
At 1 April 2024	27,729	4,508	5,527	24,352	3,189	440	65,745
Additions	1,377	-	215	2,690	167	712	5,161
Disposals	-	-	(108)	(563)	(191)	-	(862)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>29,106</b>	<b>4,508</b>	<b>5,634</b>	<b>26,479</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>70,044</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>							
At 1 April 2024	5,225	1,004	2,680	18,347	2,666	-	29,922
Charge for the year	507	104	575	2,238	252	-	3,676
Disposals	-	-	(98)	(415)	(183)	-	(696)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>5,732</b>	<b>1,108</b>	<b>3,157</b>	<b>20,170</b>	<b>2,735</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,902</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>							
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>23,374</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>2,477</b>	<b>6,309</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>37,142</b>
At 31 March 2024	22,504	3,504	2,848	6,005	522	440	35,823

## 11. Fixed asset investments

Company	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Holding in Helping Sense Limited	30	30

The company owns 100% of 30,000 ordinary shares of £1 each share capital of Helping Sense Limited, which is incorporated in England and Wales, (Company registration



2214430) and exists to raise funds for the company. There is no readily available market value for the company and accordingly it is accounted for at cost. The Trustees believe that the carrying value of the investment is supported by the underlying net assets (note 28).

Sense4Enterprise Limited (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities

## 12. Debtors

<b>Group</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	5,196	6,286
Prepayments	2,001	2,128
Accrued income	2,858	1,890
Other debtors	373	619
Taxation recoverable	231	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,659</b>	<b>11,253</b>

<b>Company</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	5,196	6,286
Prepayments	1,987	2,113
Accrued income	2,594	1,731
Other debtors	264	588
Taxation recoverable	231	330
Amounts owed by group undertakings	190	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,462</b>	<b>11,368</b>

Trade debtors are shown net of bad and doubtful net provisions of £150k (2024: £124k)

## 13. Current asset investment

<b>Group and Company</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bank deposits	-	4,000

## 14. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade creditors	2,443	3,111
Taxation and social security	1,123	1,077
Deferred income	1,029	1,028
Accruals	4,054	4,103
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,649</b>	<b>9,319</b>



<b>Group</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Released to Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>New income Deferred</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2025</b>
Deferred Income	1028	(1028)	1029	1,029

Deferred income represents income received or invoiced in advance of the provision of services or events, and will be recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which it relates.

<b>Company</b>	<b>2025 £000s</b>	<b>2024 £000s</b>
Trade creditors	2,442	3,111
Taxation and social security	1,123	1,077
Deferred income	1,015	955
Accruals	3,987	4,011
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,567</b>	<b>9,154</b>

<b>Company</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Released to Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>New Income Deferred</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2025</b>
Provisions or dilapidations	959	(959)	1,015	1,015

## 15. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2025 £000s</b>	<b>2024 £000s</b>
Other creditors	16	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>

## 16. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

<b>Group and Charity</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2024</b>	<b>Charged to Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>Utilised</b>	<b>Balance 31 March 2025</b>
Provisions or dilapidations	953	243	(99)	1,097



## 17. Movement of Funds 2024-25 (Group)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2024 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2025 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	40,085	96,213	(99,624)	5,468	42,142
Designated funds	5,000	-	-	(5,000)	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>45,085</b>	<b>96,213</b>	<b>(99,624)</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>42,142</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	60	-	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	407	-	(407)	-
Children's Services: East	-	74	-	(74)	-
Children's Services: South East	8	76	-	(55)	29
Children's Services: City Bridge (MSI London)	-	53	(22)	(9)	22
Community Connections	76	-	-	(76)	-
Employment and Benefits Staff	112	82	(56)	(49)	89
Hadley Centre (Operations)	80	15	-	-	95
Lottery Guide Dogs	52	-	-	(52)	-
Northern Ireland Day Centre	108	-	-	(54)	54
Northern Ireland Special Donations	188	5	(11)	(170)	12
Stables and riding	59	8	-	-	67
TBSE, Hyde Close, Barnet	57	10	(3)	-	64
Warren Farm Rd	378	-	(3)	-	375
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	159	411	-	-	570
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	75	-	(75)	-	-
DSCR (Nourish) Project	-	85	-	-	85
SCL Capital Fund	77	-	-	-	77
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	32	477	(412)	-	97
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	(250)	-	-
Sport: Sport England System Partner	55	565	(620)	-	-
Other Sense	706	559	(349)	234	1,150
CareTech Foundation EI TZ 3Y 22-25	14	45	(59)	-	-
Hollyhock Foundation Nepal	-	52	(31)	-	21
Comic Relief Uganda 2024-2027	-	70	(40)	-	30
Hear The World Foundation	-	78	(78)	-	-
Romania in Country	120	74	(52)	-	142
Tanzania DID TO51	-	360	(360)	-	-
Else Krone Fresenius	-	80	(55)	-	25
DID TO45 Bangladesh Education	-	182	(182)	-	-
Peru KJCF Feb 2024- Jan 2027	60	69	(51)	-	78
Tanzania Holding Fund	-	1	(52)	52	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	6	(89)	83	-
Kenya Holding Fund	-	3	(65)	62	-
DID TO53 Nepal	-	205	(205)	-	-



DID TO50 Kenya	-	113	(113)	-	-
Deaf Child Worldwide (Kenya)	32	29	(61)	-	-
Nelumbo Stiftung Early Intervention (Uganda) Phase 2	100	118	(140)	-	78
MTN Telecoms (Uganda)	12	180	(170)	-	22
Nelumbo Stiftung Education Phase 2	262	549	(476)	-	335
John Lewis Foundation	100	(9)	(86)	-	5
Other Sense International	144	370	(385)	48	177
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>5,652</b>	<b>(4,551)</b>	<b>(468)</b>	<b>3,759</b>
Endowment					
Property	352	-	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>48,563</b>	<b>101,865</b>	<b>(104,175)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,253</b>

## 17. Movement of Funds 2023-24 (Group)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	39,136	89,951	(92,891)	3,889	40,085
Designated funds	8,500	8	(325)	(3,183)	5,000
Pension (note 10)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>47,636</b>	<b>89,959</b>	<b>(93,216)</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>45,085</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Big Lottery Fund Grant	42	43	(66)	-	19
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	58	2	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	321	-	(321)	-
Children's Services: South East	1	82	-	(74)	9
Community Connections	105	-	-	(29)	76
Employment and Benefits Staff	82	90	(49)	(11)	112
Hadley Centre (Operations)	65	15	-	-	80
Holidays Fund	102	56	-	(158)	-
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	(12)	-	-	52
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	(8)	-	-	47
Northern Ireland Day Centre	114	-	-	(5)	109
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	95	149	(152)	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	181	16	(9)	-	188
Sport England - Active Together	104	-	(104)	1	1
Virtual Buddying	-	51	-	(51)	-
Warren Farm Rd	202	176	-	-	378
Woodside - Operations	60	7	-	(67)	-
CSS Cymru Fund	150	3	-	(21)	132
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	-	155	-	-	155
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	-	88	(77)	-	11



## 17. Movement of Funds 2023-24 (Group) Cont'd

Group	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Children's Services: Midlands	-	78	-	(78)	-
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	-	334	(321)	19	32
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	(208)	3	45
Sport: Sport England System Partner	-	692	(487)	-	205
Siblings & Young Carers Programme	-	61	-	(61)	-
Other Sense	875	840	(1098)	(38)	655
Active Citizens Romania	27	51	(64)	-	14
CareTech Foundation EI TZ 3Y 22-25	-	71	(57)	-	14
Comic Relief Uganda 2020	111	67	(181)	-	(3)
Romania in Country	135	59	(73)	-	121
Uganda iHelp Project	51	22	(53)	-	20
UK Aid Match Kenya 2020	85	-	(56)	-	29
Kenya Holding Fund	-	4	(101)	97	-
MTN Telecoms (Uganda)	-	162	(149)	-	13
FCDO Disability Inclusive Development	-	713	(713)	-	-
Nelumbo Stiftung Education Phase 2	-	457	(195)	-	262
John Lewis Foundation	-	100	-	-	100
KJCF (Peru) 2	-	64	(5)	-	59
Other Sense International	9	57	(39)	12	39
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>(4,257)</b>	<b>(706)</b>	<b>3,126</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	351	1	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>50,760</b>	<b>95,276</b>	<b>(97,473)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48,563</b>

## 17. Movement of Funds 2024-25 (Company)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2024 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2025 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	40,197	93,795	(97,683)	5,712	42,021
Designated funds	5,000	-	-	(5,000)	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>45,197</b>	<b>93,795</b>	<b>(97,683)</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>42,021</b>



<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	60	-	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	407	-	(407)	-
Children's Services: East	-	74	-	(74)	-
Children's Services: South East	8	76	-	(55)	29
Children's Services: City Bridge (MSI London)	-	53	(22)	(9)	22
Community Connections	76	-	-	(76)	-
Employment and Benefits Staff	112	82	(56)	(49)	89
Hadley Centre (Operations)	80	15	-	-	95
Lottery Guide Dogs	52	-	-	(52)	-
Northern Ireland Day Centre	108	-	-	(54)	54
Northern Ireland Special Donations	188	5	(11)	(170)	12
Stables and riding	59	8	-	-	67
TBSE, Hyde Close, Barnet	57	10	(3)	-	64
Warren Farm Rd	378	-	(3)	-	375
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	159	411	-	-	570
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	75	-	(75)	-	-
DSCR (Nourish) Project	-	85	-	-	85
SCL Capital Fund	77	-	-	-	77
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	32	477	(412)	-	97
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	(250)	-	-
Sport: Sport England System Partner	55	565	(620)	-	-
Other	706	559	(349)	234	1,150
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>3,077</b>	<b>(1,801)</b>	<b>(712)</b>	<b>2,846</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	352	-	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>47,831</b>	<b>96,872</b>	<b>(99,484)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,219</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £50,000 and accounts for 60% of the overall restricted fund.

## 17. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Company)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	38,618	90,030	(93,149)	4,256	39,755
Designated funds	8,500	7	(325)	(3,182)	5,000
Pension (note 10)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>47,118</b>	<b>90,037</b>	<b>(93,474)</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>44,755</b>



<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Big Lottery Fund Grant	42	43	(66)	-	19
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	58	2	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	321	-	(321)	-
Children's Services: South East	1	82	-	(74)	9
Community Connections	105	-	-	(29)	76
Employment and Benefits Staff	82	90	(49)	(11)	112
Hadley Centre (Operations)	65	15	-	-	80
Holidays Fund	102	56	-	(158)	-
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	(12)	-	-	52
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	(8)	-	-	47
Northern Ireland Day Centre	114	-	-	(5)	109
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	95	149	(152)	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	181	16	(9)	-	188
Sport England - Active Together	104	-	(104)	1	1
Warren Farm Rd	202	176	-	-	378
Woodside - Operations	60	7	-	(67)	-
CSS Cymru Fund	150	3	-	(21)	132
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	-	155	-	-	155
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	-	88	(77)	-	11
Children's Services: Midlands	-	78	-	(78)	-
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	-	334	(321)	19	32
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	(208)	3	45
Sport: Sport England System Partner	-	692	(487)	-	205
Siblings & Young Carers Programme	-	61	-	(61)	-
Other Sense	1,197	441	(445)	(272)	921
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,677</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>(1,918)</b>	<b>(1,074)</b>	<b>2,724</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	351	1	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>50,146</b>	<b>93,077</b>	<b>(95,392)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>47,831</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £50k. 'Other funds' are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £50k.



## Unrestricted funds

### **General fund**

This represents the accumulated reserves of the charity that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees.

### **Designated funds**

There are no designated funds at March 2025 (March 2024: £5.0 million). Funds have been transferred to unrestricted funds in anticipation of the completion of the new organisation strategy which will refresh strategic outcomes and provide a basis for future designation of reserves.

## Restricted funds

Sense is reliant on the support of individuals, corporations, trusts, other charities and state bodies in order to deliver our activities. Monies that are received for an express purpose are restricted to that purpose.

The principal restricted funds are considered to be:

### **Sport England**

A three-year project to build on our foundations of supporting disabled people with complex needs to get active.

### **Children's services**

Money donated to support Children & Young People who are Deafblind/multi-sensory impaired.

### **Northern Ireland day centre**

Commissioned day service opportunities for disabled adults with complex needs.

### **Northern Ireland special donations**

An accumulation of donations / fundraised funds raised locally for services in Northern Ireland.

### **Holidays**

Donations and fundraised income to support accessible holidays for disabled people with complex needs.



### **Warren Farm Road**

A legacy donation restricted to be used against costs at the Warren Farm Road Care Home.

### **Arts Council**

A multi-year grant under the Arts Council England NPO (National Portfolio Organisations) Programme towards our Arts & Wellbeing service.

### **Early Intervention – Reaching Communities**

A three-year project for the Early Intervention Connect and Play Project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) Reaching Communities Fund.

### **Endowment funds**

These are properties given to the charity for its use. The movement on the fund represents the depreciation charge in the year.

### **Transfers between funds**

Other transfers between funds represent either transfers from unrestricted funds to cover shortfalls of restricted funds or transfers from restricted funds to cover related expenditure paid by unrestricted monies.

## **18. Analysis of net assets between fund balances 2024-25**

<b>Group 2025</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Designated Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Endowment Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Tangible Fixed Asset	36,798	-	-	352	37,150
Net current assets	5,363	-	3,756	-	9,119
Long-term liabilities	(16)	-	-	-	(16)
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,145</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,756</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>46,253</b>

<b>Company 2025</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Designated funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Endowment funds</b>	<b>Total funds</b>
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Tangible fixed assets	36,790	-	-	352	37,142
Fixed asset Investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	5,201	-	2,846	-	8,047
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,021</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,846</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>45,219</b>



## 19. Analysis of net assets between fund balances 2023-24

Group 2024	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	35,483	-	-	352	35,835
Net current assets	4,626	5,000	3,126	-	12,752
Long-term liabilities	(24)	-	-	-	(24)
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,085</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>48,563</b>

Company 2024	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	35,471	-	-	352	35,823
Fixed asset investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	4,254	5,000	2,724	-	11,978
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,755</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>47,831</b>

## 20. Capital commitments

At 31 March 2025 the Group had capital commitments of £0k (2024: £555k).

## 21. Contingent liabilities

Sense, Sense International and Helping Sense Limited are members of a group VAT registration. Under the Value Added Tax Act 1983, all members of a VAT group are jointly and severally liable for any tax due during the period of their membership.

## 22. Operating lease commitments

Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

Group and Company	2025 Land and buildings £000s	2024 Land and buildings £000s
Operating leases which expire:		
Within one year	4,062	3,985
In two to five years	12,940	13,055
After five years	10,793	10,907
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,795</b>	<b>27,947</b>



## 23. Reconciliation of net Income/(expenditure) to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Net income/(expenditure)	(2,310)	(2,193)
Interest received	(297)	(471)
Depreciation Charges	3,689	3,421
Profit/(loss) on sale of fixed assets	(2)	(305)
(Increase)/ decrease in stock	167	30
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	594	(828)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(678)	385
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>39</b>

## 24. Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year	(3,534)	(4,523)
Bank loan interest repayments	-	-
<b>Changes generated from cash flows</b>	<b>(3,534)</b>	<b>(4,523)</b>
Net cash at start of year (including short term deposits)	10,144	14,667
<b>Net cash at end of year</b>	<b>6,610</b>	<b>10,144</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net funds 2024-25

	At 1 April 2024 £000s	Cash flows £000s	Non-cash changes £000s	At 31 March 2025 £000s
Cash at bank and in hand	6,144	466	-	6,610
Current asset investments	4,000	(4,000)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,144</b>	<b>(3,534)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,610</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net funds 2023-24

	At 1 April 2023 £000s	Cash flows £000s	Non-cash changes £000s	At 31 March 2024 £000s
Cash at bank and in hand	5,667	477	-	6,144
Current asset investments	9,000	(5,000)	-	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,667</b>	<b>(4,523)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,144</b>



## 26. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	6,610	6,144
Current asset investments	-	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,610</b>	<b>10,144</b>

Current asset investments are fixed term deposits for a term of one year or less.

## 27. Related party transactions

The Group provides services to children or family members of some Trustees and Board members of the charity. These services are provided as part of the contracts agreed with funding authorities on the same commercial terms as with any other service user. These transactions happen at arm's length.

Balances with subsidiaries are disclosed below:

	31 March 2025 Donation Provided £000s	31 March 2025 Debtor/(Creditor) £000s	31 March 2024 Debtor/(Creditor) £000s
Sense International	300	69	215
Helping Sense Limited		(30)	(30)
Sense4Enterprise Limited		151	135

In financial year 2024/25 Sense provided £300k donation to Sense International, also paid 5% commission of £160k to Helping Sense Limited from total Gift Aid Sense.

## 28. Subsidiary companies

Sense International – Company registration number 3742986

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Income	3,580	3,135
Expenditure	(3,261)	(2,817)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>318</b>
Assets	1,353	1,271
Liabilities	(167)	(404)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>867</b>



## Helping Sense Limited - Company registration number 2214430

	<b>2025</b>	2024
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Turnover	<b>1,385</b>	5,436
Cost of sales	<b>(731)</b>	(838)
Gross profit	<b>654</b>	4,598
Operating expenses	<b>(654)</b>	(4,598)
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>-</b>	-
Assets	<b>30</b>	30
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>30</b>	30

## Sense4Enterprise Limited - Company registration number 08112973

	<b>2025</b>	2024
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Income	<b>156</b>	314
Expenditure	<b>(172)</b>	(322)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(16)</b>	(8)
Liabilities	<b>(151)</b>	(134)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>(151)</b>	(134)



## 29. Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2024 £000s	Total 2023 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	9,763	4,214	-	13,977	12,875
Charitable activities	1	63,295	1,111	-	64,406	59,154
Trading	1	15,750	-	-	15,750	13,708
Investment income	2	469	2	-	471	299
Other income	3	372	-	-	372	491
<b>Total income</b>		<b>89,649</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>94,976</b>	<b>86,527</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
	4					
Raising funds		6,399	-	-	6,399	5,580
Charitable activities		69,420	4,257	-	73,677	69,667
Trading		16,584	-	-	16,584	13,917
Other		813	-	-	813	1,081
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>93,216</b>	<b>4,257</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>97,473</b>	<b>90,245</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	5	304	-	-	304	52
<b>Net (decrease) / increase before transfer between funds</b>		<b>(3,263)</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>(3,666)</b>
Transfers between funds	17	706	(706)	-	-	-
<b>Net (expense)/income before pension settlement</b>		<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>(3,666)</b>
Settlement of defined benefit pension scheme		-	-	-	-	(2,675)
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension scheme		-	-	-	-	11,676
<b>Net gain on settlement of defined benefit pension scheme</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,001</b>
<b>Net (decrease) / increase in funds</b>		<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>5,335</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward	17	47,642	2,762	352	50,756	45,425
Net (decrease) / increase in funds	17	(2,557)	364	0	(2,193)	5,335
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>	17	<b>45,085</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>48,563</b>	<b>50,760</b>

**SENSE, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 289868

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# Accounts

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# **Sense Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024**

**Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

Sense: Registered company number 1825301

Registered charity number 289868

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## Message from our President

There is so much to celebrate looking back at our work over the last year, and so much to look forward to in the year ahead.

My role is informed by the people Sense supports and the difference we make to so many lives. That's why my visit to one of our new regional hubs in Loughborough last year was so uplifting and inspiring.

Sense Hub Loughborough is a place for disabled children, young people and adults to develop confidence, try new things, make friends and discover shared interests.

Bespoke studios within the hub offer a range of services, activities and programmes to support disabled people and their families. The children's studio supports children aged 0-8, with a focus on connection and play. The activity studio hosts our arts, sports and wellbeing activities, including everything from music workshops to yoga sessions. Finally, the employment studio is kitted out with the latest assistive technology and software necessary to support individuals with sensory impairments looking for work.

What I found most impactful was seeing firsthand how the hub creates a space where families can come together. In fact, last year we supported over 1,000 children, their families and carers through the hub.

I know that this simply would not have been possible without our amazing community of supporters.

At the same time, we should also acknowledge the challenges and uncertainty we face with the ongoing cost of living crisis.

This impacts Sense as a social care provider, fundraiser and retailer, as well as in our international work. It has also disproportionately affected the children, adults and families we support.



We must also recognise that it is a challenging time for our team at Sense and acknowledge their unwavering support and passion for their work.

Sense will continue to navigate this extended period of uncertainty with sensitivity and resolve. We have a clear strategy and plan to guide us, and we will realise our vision whatever the challenges we face.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Levy', is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

The Lord Levy - President



## Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

It's great to look back on such a successful year, with so much achieved towards delivering on our strategy.

One of our highlights was the launch of our national early intervention services for children, young people and families. These services are providing essential support to help children communicate, connect and play.

We also launched a new regional Sense Hub in Denbigh, extending our reach in local communities. Our new Sense Hub Belfast will also be launching in 2024.

And, of course, we continued to support people with complex disabilities to live independently, pursue their goals and be part of their communities through our accommodation services, day opportunities, community services and our colleges.

The cost of living crisis had a massive impact over the last year, particularly on how much it costs to run our services. We've had to look hard at where we can be more efficient, including reducing the use of agency staff in our services by finding new ways to recruit and keep our own amazing teams.

But, whilst we're all affected by rising prices, we mustn't forget that children and adults with complex disabilities are often hardest hit.

Many disabled households have to buy specialist equipment and use more energy for vital services like extra laundry, charging wheelchairs and powering oxygen machines. The cost of living has put tremendous pressure on disabled households, with more than half experiencing debt and nearly a third admitting to skipping meals to save money.

This just shows why all political parties need to show more courage and imagination to develop policies that focus on removing the barriers disabled people face.

We need to have a national conversation about inclusion. And we need to ensure that disability awareness becomes a commitment – not just a 'nice thing to do'.



We'll continue to push Government to come up with plans to strengthen our welfare system, provide more tailored employment support for disabled people and, above all, work with the people affected to shape these policies. Otherwise, it's disabled people that will lose out.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Molloy".

Justin Molloy  
Chair of Sense

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Kramer".

Richard Kramer  
Chief Executive of Sense and Sense International



# Report of the Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (including the Strategic Report)

## About Sense

### Our vision and mission

Our vision is a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.

### Who we are

We believe that every disabled person should have the opportunity to connect with others and be included in the world. We use our knowledge and expertise to deliver personalised, creative and flexible support at every stage of life, no matter how complex someone's disability.

### Who we support

Sense supports people with complex disabilities, including deafblindness. From the first weeks of life and through the major milestones of adulthood, we want to ensure disabled people and their families are supported to live fully at every stage of life.

People with complex disabilities tend to have two or more of the following:

- Deafness or hearing impairment
- Blindness or vision impairment
- Learning disability
- Autism

People who are deafblind aren't necessarily totally deaf and/or totally blind. Even with mild sight and hearing loss, you'll still experience unique daily challenges.

There are 1.6 million people in the UK with complex disabilities, most of whom need significant or high-level care in their daily lives.



## What we do and how we do it

Sense supports disabled people from the first weeks of life through all the major milestones of adulthood. No matter how complex someone's disability, we provide support in people's homes, in centres and in residential services across the country.

We also offer practical information, advice and support to carers and families, enabling them to build the resilience to thrive, not just survive.

With Sense, children can develop new ways to communicate and play, adults can build confidence and find a place in their community, and families can feel seen, supported and valued.

Together, we can achieve long term change. That's why we go to any lengths, step up in the face of adversity and stand together with the 1.6 million people with complex disabilities in the UK.

## Our year in numbers

### Our reach in numbers

Over the last year, we reached almost 32,000 people and families – 2,000 more than the previous year. We expanded services to support more people in new locations, including the North West, while also continuing our long-term core services and support.

We raised **£13,977,000** in donations and legacies for our work across Sense and Sense International, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, an increase of 8.5% from the previous year (£12,875,000).

We reached more supporters through our new campaign, 'Give Carers a Break', which calls for greater investment in respite services to support family carers. We worked with **18** family carers to support them in sharing their experiences in the media. Their stories were covered more than **300** times in the news, including ITV News and the Times, and our campaign film was viewed more than **44,000** times on social media.



During Deafblind Awareness Week, we also launched our myth-busting film, featuring people sharing their experiences of being deafblind. This was viewed more than **10,000** times, and wider content received **25,000** engagements on social media.

Our social media followers rose by **16%**, with engagement remaining higher than similar charities, and our video views rose **28%** year on year.

### Our service in numbers

We supported **279** people with short breaks for disabled people and their families, up by **13%** from the previous year.

We expanded our employment offer and reached new people in areas like Loughborough, supporting a total of **542** people across our services and employment events. This was an increase of **128%** on the previous year.

We reached over **5,141** children, young people and families across the country through our face-to-face services, an increase of **32%**. We also reached **2,603** families through our digital toolkits.

Our arts and wellbeing activities continued to grow, with **8,683** children, young people and adults benefiting from our activities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Through our Sense Active programme, we were able to grow and expand into new areas of the country thanks to Sports England funding, which meant we reached **5,174** people.

In partnership with local and education authorities, we supported **341** people in our accommodation services, similar to the previous year. **626** people accessed one of our day opportunities, individual support or both, through our ten Sense Centres. Our specialist college sites worked with **356** young people and adults, up by **6%** from the previous year.

Our information and advice line supported people with **5,157** telephone and email enquiries, an increase of **2%** from the previous year.

We continue to achieve over **90%** of our services being judged by the Care Quality Commission as 'good' or 'outstanding'.



## Our influence in numbers

As of March 2024, there were just over **155,000** people actively supporting Sense through donating, campaigning and championing the rights of disabled people.

From April 2023 to March 2024, **9,446** people took action in some way to support our cost of living and respite work.

Our call for assistive technology to be made available to disabled people in job centres has been supported in debates by members of the Commons and the Lords, and **16** written questions have been tabled on our behalf. We have given evidence to **two** government committees and an All-Party Parliamentary Group. We are hopeful that they will include our recommendation in their inquiry reports.

Over **550** people visited our stand at the Conservative and Labour party conferences, where we shared information on the lives of people with complex disabilities.

Over **30** MPs wore Sense badges for the Prime Minister's Questions during Deafblind Awareness Week, raising our profile on social media as well as in parliament.

## Our strategic outcomes: plans and achievements

### Outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start

Being a parent or carer of a child who is deafblind or who has complex disabilities can be challenging. In many cases, parents can struggle to communicate and connect with their child, especially if the child expresses themselves in a unique way.

Getting the right support at the right time can make all the difference to a child's development. It also strengthens and supports families, helping them to accept and embrace their future lives.

### Key achievements

Across all our charitable programmes, Sense reached 5,208 children and their families last year. We continued to grow the **Sense Early Intervention and Play** service in Birmingham, Loughborough and North Wales. We also extended our reach to Bristol,



offering Sense Connect and Play sessions for 2,392 children with complex disabilities, aged 0-8 years, and their families.

These services support the vital contribution that free play makes to a child's development. By offering activities ranging from sensory stories to outdoor forest schools, we helped children find new ways to connect, communicate and play.

We also launched the **Sense Toy and Tech** service, which helps parents looking for specialist assistive technology to try before they buy, supporting them to find the right toys and equipment to help their child learn and communicate.

Our **multi-sensory impaired (MSI) children's team** of teachers and practitioners continues to provide tailored extra support for 1,572 children and young people aged 0-25 nationally. This includes specialist one-to-one support at home or in nursery/school, early years groups, family events, parent/carer information and wellbeing sessions, and bespoke training.

The team reached children and families through face-to-face and virtual activities, supporting them to communicate with each other and access education. They also led and attended professional events across the country to raise awareness and share knowledge of deafblindness and MSI, reaching over 1,150 professionals.

Responding to feedback from families, we changed the way we hosted **Sense Holidays**, opening them up to whole families. In total 36 people (nine families), including siblings, parents and carers, went on a holiday. Four families from our Sense Connect and Play service were supported to attend an accessible holiday home in the Cotswolds. Meanwhile, five families who we support through our MSI team went for a fun-packed weekend together in Devon, with specialist support.

Families told us they appreciated how Sense supported them to access trips away and events in their communities, helping them cope with the cost of living and extra financial barriers which would otherwise make these trips impossible.



Over the last year we also launched new **digital toolkits**, which offer a range of downloadable information, services and products for children with complex disabilities and their families. Families downloaded this content over 3,700 times.

### **Plans for 2024-25**

- We'll launch early intervention and multi-sensory impairment programmes in Northern Ireland.
- We'll expand our Sense Toy and Tech service to reach more families and more locations.
- We'll develop a plan to recruit, retain and train more multi-sensory impairment specialists.
- We'll continue to grow our Sense Early Intervention Programme, expanding in London and Leeds.
- We'll further develop our digital support for parents across all our children and young people's services, ensuring that we reach more families than ever.

### **Outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

We believe that everyone has a right to live a fulfilling life and play an active part in their community, including through equal access to work, education and training. With the right support – reflecting people's aspirations and needs – we can ensure that no one is left out or unable to fulfil their potential.

### **Key achievements**

Our new **supported living** site in Belfast opened for six people who are new to Sense. The tenants have now all moved in and are living independently with the freedom to choose the support they want and need.

Our target last year was to reach 75 new adults across **services that are commissioned**, for example by local authorities and integrated care systems (ICSs). We significantly exceeded this target, with 132 new adults benefiting from our support, including across our supported living, college, residential care and day services.



We have continued to develop our **Sense Hubs** across the UK. Our new hub in Denbigh, opened in September 2023, offers a range of vital services and support for disabled people to make new friends, learn new skills and express themselves.

### **Plans for 2024-25**

- We have identified a building for our new Sense Hub Belfast, where we'll collaborate with the MS Society to provide services funded by both commissioners and our charitable donations.
- We'll take steps to ensure that the Sense operating model for commissioned services continues to be robust and of a high quality.
- We'll design and develop a digital social care system that meets the needs of Sense and its regulators. The system will be implemented in 2025/26.

### **Outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected in their communities**

We know that many disabled people, across all stages of life, feel lonely. This is a very common experience among the people we support.

We respond to this challenge by supporting people to build confidence, access new environments, create a sense of connection within their local community and find a route out of loneliness.

### **Key achievements**

Over the last year we helped 17,851 people and families combat loneliness, learn new skills and make connections through a range of activities.

In 2023/24, we hosted a wider range of **Sense Holidays** than in previous years, creating more opportunities for people and their families to take a break. In all, 137 people benefited from being able to go on a memorable accessible holiday with our support. Our main holiday programme hosted 19 holidays across a range of venues, venturing to Gloucester, North Yorkshire, Kent and Blackpool. Thanks to 86 wonderful volunteers, we enabled 71 holidaymakers to enjoy these opportunities.



We also worked alongside the Deafblind International Network to enable 30 holidaymakers who are deafblind and their supporters to visit a four-day event in Holland. The event brought together people from all over Europe, including Germany, Norway, Denmark and Ireland.

We supported 757 **siblings and young carers** through our services. Based on feedback from young people and parents, we began offering monthly wellbeing sessions, facilitated by qualified counsellors. Specific group sessions were aimed at teenagers, with sessions ranging from revision tips to CV writing. Siblings were supported to develop peer-to-peer friendships, and we ran another successful residential trip for 25 siblings, supported by Forward Carers. We also launched our sibling service at Sense Hub Loughborough.

The **Sense Virtual Buddy** programme created opportunities for 491 people to connect virtually, learn new skills, have fun and form fantastic friendships.

Our **Sense Arts** programme was expanded and reached 8,683 people across the year, thanks to new funding from Arts Council England. This opened up high quality arts and cultural activities to 489 people with complex disabilities, empowering them to use creativity to express themselves and connect with the world around them. An additional 2,978 people also engaged with our public specialist arts events and workshops, allowing many more people to find out about our work.

Our **Sense Active** programme supported 5,174 people with complex disabilities to access sport and physical activity. We also trained 519 sports professionals, carers and paid supporters to develop their skills in inclusive sports practice and sensory approaches.

Our **employment programme** supported 542 disabled people and employers, including providing access to training, volunteering and work preparation.

### **Plans for 2024-25**

- We will further develop the Sense Virtual Buddying programme, including through partnerships, to increase our reach.
- We'll continue to develop a sustainable Sense Holidays programme, increasing opportunities for children, families and adults to enjoy breaks away.



- We'll continue to deliver our national arts programme, providing more opportunities to connect through visual arts, dance and music.
- We'll deliver Sense Active's exciting programme of sport and training, acting as a System Partner for Sport England.

## Outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action

For almost 70 years, Sense has been standing up for disability rights. We support disabled people and their families to fight for change on a local and national level.

### Key achievements

From volunteering as a virtual buddy or with our shops, services and holidays, to campaigning, fundraising and donating, last year we were proud to count over 150,000 people as active supporters of Sense.

We continued to ensure that more people heard about Sense and our work through high profile events, including functions at the House of Lords and the opening of our Loughborough Hub with HRH The Princess Royal. And we grew our work with businesses across the UK, being supported by organisations such as the Village Group, PayPal, Next, Tara Group, Morrisons, Pertemps and Severn Trent.

Most importantly, people felt inspired by the disabled voices and personal stories we promoted from people with lived experience. These accounts of lived experience motivated others to take action and support people with complex disabilities to live the life they choose.

Our new campaign, 'Give Carers a Break', shed light on the need for more respite support for family carers. We know this remains a huge issue, made worse by the pandemic and cost of living crisis. The campaign was covered widely on TV and in newspapers, as well as being viewed hundreds of thousands of times on social media.

This campaign, like all our campaigns, focused on the experiences of the people we support and their families. Over the course of the year, we supported 126 people, including disabled people, family members, volunteers and support workers, to share their



experiences in the media. From Jade Cotton – who highlighted the difficulties she encountered finding work as a disabled person, to Anna Tesdale – a mother and carer who visited 10 Downing Street as an ambassador of our cost of living campaign.

Our campaigns led to over 9,000 people taking action to support our cause. This included almost 300 who personally emailed their local MP about our ‘Give Carers a Break’ campaign, inviting them to meet with Sense at political party conferences.

In July 2023, we published the latest results of our annual Potential and Possibility research, highlighting the experiences of people with complex disabilities on a range of issues. We shared our findings with visitors to our stand at Labour and Conservative party conferences. The research was also showcased in a BBC Breakfast feature, highlighting the issue of loneliness among people with complex disabilities. This feature was watched by 6.5 million people.

### **Plans for 2024-25**

- We will present our long-term goals to the new UK Government, gather support from our community, and work with all political parties before and after the general election to represent disabled people and their carers.
- We’ll continue to empower people to tell their own stories, growing our bank of engaging case studies.
- We’ll develop more stand-out campaigns linked to our cause, including using digital marketing to test new approaches to spreading our reach.
- We’ll further develop our philanthropy and partnerships programme, establishing three sustainable and measurable income streams: trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships, and philanthropy/major donor giving.

### **Sense International: performance against objectives for 2023/24**

Sense International supports children and adults with deafblindness in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. People with deafblindness in the countries we work in are particularly vulnerable to poverty and unemployment, with lower educational outcomes than other disabled people. They face multiple barriers, including



lack of access to healthcare, education, vocational training and opportunities to participate in their community. Lack of accessible information and communication makes it extremely difficult for them to voice their issues.

### Strategic objective 1: People with deafblindness are included in national systems

We show how people with deafblindness can be included in national systems – such as healthcare, education and vocational training – working and innovating in partnership with governments, partner organisations and parents.

We aim to support people with deafblindness throughout their lives, offering diagnosis as early as possible and supporting them at key milestones in adulthood, from education and employment to family and community life.

Through our work, we demonstrate to governments, health authorities, families and communities how early screening and intervention can make a huge difference to a child's life. Last year 70,887 children were screened for deafblindness across our countries.

We work with families, schools, colleges, partner organisations, government institutions and ministries of education, to enable learners with deafblindness to get the educational support they need to fulfil their potential. Last year, across all countries, we supported 5,586 children with deafblindness to access education.

Like anyone their age, young people with deafblindness want to be as independent as possible, earn a living and contribute to their families and communities. We support young people with deafblindness to achieve this, enabling them to join a vocational training centre, become an apprentice, or plan to start their own business. Last year, 1,180 young people were supported with vocational training or opportunities to earn across our eight countries.

### Strategic objective 2: People with deafblindness, and the people who support them, have more information, skills and knowledge

We share information and train people with deafblindness; their families and carers; health-workers; educators and other professionals; communities; and decision-makers, so that people with deafblindness get better support.



Across all our countries, 9,178 people were trained to support people with deafblindness.

We also continue to develop the online Global Deafblindness Resource Centre – deafblindness.info. Funded by the Nelumbo Foundation, this offers accessible information and resources to those who support people with deafblindness, including parents, caregivers, teachers and NGO workers.

### Strategic objective 3: People with deafblindness are recognised in laws, policies and budgets

We raise our voice to ensure the promises and commitments of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other international human rights legal instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are realised for people with deafblindness. Together with our partners and collaborators, including organisations led by people with deafblindness, we advocate for change in policy, programmes and services so that people with deafblindness are included in every aspect of life.

### Sense International: plans for 2024/25

In 2024/25, we will continue to implement the refreshed five-year strategy we put in place in 2021/22. We will deliver work on early intervention, inclusive education, and vocational training and livelihoods, alongside advocacy, training and knowledge sharing, so that people with deafblindness are meaningfully included in systems and societies. A few of our priorities for 2024/25 are:

- In Latin America, we will work in a new geography, Ecuador, and expand our education and livelihoods work to reach more people with deafblindness.
- In Kenya, we'll work with local authorities and partners to set up hearing screening and early intervention services in Garissa and Kwale counties. We'll train local health workers and professionals on early intervention approaches to identify and support children with deafblindness.
- In Nepal, we'll enable children and young people with deafblindness and multi-sensory impairments to have access to early screening, education, lifelong learning and skills training in Kathmandu, Kaski, Rupandehi and Morang districts.



- In India, through a new two-year partnership with the John Lewis Partnership, we'll support young people with deafblindness and multi-sensory impairments to access employment in Delhi and Alleppey.
- In Uganda, we'll expand our early intervention services to two new districts.
- We'll continue to deliver our Global Inclusive Education programme, ensuring more children with deafblindness and complex disabilities have access to education. As part of this programme, we will launch our Global Resource Hub, a digital platform with information and resources for people with deafblindness and the people who support them.
- To mark 30 years of Sense International in 2024, we'll plan a series of campaigns and events, including a gala in September to raise awareness and support for people with deafblindness and our work.

## Quality and safeguarding

### Quality

Last year, our services rated 'good' or 'outstanding' decreased from 94% to 90.4%. This is due to two services being re-inspected and dropping from a 'good' rating to a 'requires improvement' rating. Our services in Northern Ireland and Wales remain 'assured' by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) respectively.

We have been working to prepare for the new CQC inspection processes, which includes assessment of services against CQC's new quality statements. Audits are being completed in person to ensure the quality, safety and compliance of services, and we have been working on new audit tools which will align with the new CQC assessment framework.

Our independently chaired **Quality Board** continues to meet quarterly to review evidence of quality assurance across our services and agree recommendations.

Our practice development team, which provides support across Sense services nationally, has a strong focus on **positive behaviour support**. Increasing people's quality of life and providing opportunities for people to flourish and thrive is an underlying aim.



Last year, 16 of our services also piloted the **Capable Environment Standards Audit Tool**. This was designed by members of the Restrain Reduction Network (RRN) and helps to assess both the quality of provision and possible causes of behaviours of concern. It is also a self-reflection tool, which means teams can identify areas of improvement themselves, as well as find things to celebrate.

## Inclusion

The **Sense User Reference Group (SURG)** is a group of people who receive a Sense service and volunteer to give valuable feedback to help us shape service delivery and continuously improve the way we meet people's needs. Last year, the group met both virtually and in person at Sense Touchbase Pears. They met with senior members of staff to talk about topics as varied as our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, our latest staff survey and the impact of global warming. A member of the group was also involved in presenting information on Sense to a group of international students. One member of SURG has resigned from the group and therefore a vacancy is open.

Our **Experts by Experience (EXE)** – people who have lived experience of social care – are employed by Sense to ensure the design and delivery of our services are truly person-centred. We are appointing a further three EXE members on fixed term contracts in spring 2024. The EXE will continue to take part in quality audits for services, both remotely and in person.

**The Working Together for Change (WTFC) programme** is part of our yearly feedback process. It ensures that we listen to the people we support, using their experiences and hopes for the future to help improve what we do.

## Safeguarding

We take safeguarding very seriously at Sense, and continually ensure our approaches reflect legislation and emerging best practices, including for online and digital services.

Our **Safeguarding Board** is independently chaired and meets regularly to review policies, processes and procedures. It also makes recommendations, including monitoring levels of training and awareness across the whole of Sense.



We are committed to the principles of **Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)**, which means we focus on the personalised outcomes that the people we support want. Last year, with funding support from Fairer Futures Fund, we ran a series of workshops with a group of individuals who used varied methods of communication. This taught about consent, saying 'No' to abuse and taking control of their decisions.

## Fundraising

So much of our work would be impossible without our supporters, and the amazing people that have donated time and money, fundraised, or left money in their Will for Sense. Last year, the generosity of our supporters meant we raised £13,977,000 for the work of Sense and Sense International. This was thanks to:

- 168 supporters who left us £3,264,000 through special bequests to remember Sense in their Will. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and thanks to their loved ones.
- 2,498 further people who enquired about leaving a gift in their Will, after seeing our TV and online advertising.
- Our brilliant individual supporters who donated £706,000 to Sense Children's Specialist Services at Christmas. Our appeal featured four-year old Verity, who has a rare genetic condition and is sight impaired. The campaign described how we have worked with Verity and her family to ensure that she can be included and feel the magic of Christmas using her other senses.
- 2,129 supporters who signed up to participate in Sense Sign School, raising money and helping people learn British Sign Language. For £10 a month, people receive a set of flash cards, conversation guides and access to teaching videos by Deaf people who use our services.
- Over 16,500 new people who gave a gift following our campaigns and appeals on TV, in newspapers and magazines, and online.
- Over 850 people who ran, cycled, trekked and swam for Sense. We also recruited 490 runners for the 2024 London Marathon, where we raised over £1M through this event for the first time.
- Over 100 tribute funds were set up for donations in memory of a loved one, collectively raising £89,000.



- 130 Sense shops that took part in four fun weeks of fundraising to raise £88,000.
- 65 local businesses that kindly donated to us.
- We also launched Stream it for Sense, a way for online video streamers to fundraise, and we had over 100 people sign up to host a Sensational Tea Party to raise money for Sense.

### **Our commitment to fundraise responsibly**

Maintaining the trust of our supporters is critical – that is why honesty and transparency are at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to following best practices in fundraising and marketing. We are members of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising and registered with the Fundraising Regulator, whose Code of Practice we follow.

We adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements and ensure that our policies, guidelines and processes are regularly reviewed. We have strict guidelines about fundraising from vulnerable people and we never put pressure on anyone to donate.

In 2023/24, we worked with four professional fundraisers to support our fundraising. We closely monitor our supplier partners and those that fundraise on our behalf to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We work extremely hard to ensure that supporters and the public have a positive experience of Sense, but we recognise we do not always get it right. You can find our complaints policy on the Sense website – we take all complaints and concerns seriously and value the feedback this provides.

Over the last year, our supporter services team received 75 complaints. We always respond quickly to requests to change the way we contact people, and we ensure that our supporters' personal details are managed respectfully and securely. We also review our data management procedures regularly.

During the reporting period, we received 60 requests through the Fundraising Preference Service asking us not to send fundraising requests, and were removed from our mailing



lists. No complaints were made to the Fundraising Regulator about Sense during this period.

If you would like to talk to us about fundraising, please contact us at: [supporterservices@sense.org.uk](mailto:supporterservices@sense.org.uk) or 0300 330 9257.

## Our volunteers

In 2023/24, our incredible volunteers continued to provide vital support for our shops, services, activities and holidays. We are so thankful for their time, energy and commitment.

**Sense shops** rely on volunteers. They are a huge part of our retail operation and help us engage with our local communities. Last year over 1,800 people volunteered across our 137 shops.

**Sense Virtual Buddying** is an important way we can tackle loneliness and social isolation. In July 2023, we filmed the story of Chapman – a 13-year-old boy with complex disabilities – and his virtual buddy, Gabi. Their story was also broadcast on BBC Breakfast, with a reach of over 4.8 million viewers. It highlighted this great initiative, only made possible through the commitment of over 200 people that volunteered to be a buddy last year.

In November 2023, we launched a new system for recruiting volunteers to Sense, replicating our system for recruiting employees. This has helped us become more efficient and effective at recruiting and welcoming new volunteers.

We appointed a new Head of Volunteering in January 2024 who is leading us in launching a revised approach and strategy for volunteering in 2024-25.

## Our people

In 2023/24 our talented and dedicated workforce and volunteers continued to ensure that our services remained safe and secure for the people we support. Everyone, from those directly involved in looking after the people we support, to those raising funds in our shops or working in office functions, played a vital role.



## How we supported our people

Last year, we appointed a wellbeing lead to focus on our wellbeing action plan, which was generated from feedback sessions held in 2023. We introduced free access to the Headspace app so our people can find wellbeing content to help with stress, anxiety, sleep and much more.

We continued to offer the Sense Plus rewards portal, with discounts for well-known retailers, and our employee assistance programme provided confidential support and counselling on a wide range of topics. We also offer a voluntary Health Care Cash Plan and Cycle to Work Scheme.

We now have a wellbeing hub on Sense Engage, our interactive intranet, which brings together all our employee support and information signposting in one place.

## Recruiting new talent

We continue to use digital campaigns to raise awareness of vacancies at Sense and encourage a wide range of applications, as well as using traditional advertising and job boards to attract candidates.

Our new applicant tracking system is now embedded for faster, more efficient recruitment and welcoming of new employees. Over 350 hiring managers are now trained to use it.

## Engaging and communicating with our people

Our intranet, Sense Engage, continues to evolve and be further embedded into our work culture and practices. Last year, we used it to share news, team information, policies and links to our systems. It helps our people find contact information for colleagues, comment on blogs or articles and access our employee benefits.

We launched an employee engagement survey in June 2023 for our people to have their say about working at Sense. From the response we have created organisational and team-level action plans. We are regularly reporting on progress with 'you said, we did' internal communications.



## Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of our continued equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journey, we reviewed our EDI Board and defined our objectives, along with creating a working action plan to help track activity. The EDI Board continued to meet regularly over the year.

Our four employee diversity networks – the disability network, the ethnic diversity network, the LGBTQ+ network and the wellbeing network – are now more established and provide a safe space for our people to meet, as well as continuing to promote an inclusive culture.

We use staff stories to raise awareness of cultural dates and religious festivals, and we created ‘toolbox talks’ for our teams to facilitate and have open conversations, as well as providing signposting information.

We developed a refreshed EDI strategy to launch in the 2024/25 financial year, which was written by a working group formed of people from all levels and areas of the organisation.

As a result of the integration of the new recruitment system and our Sense People system, we now have EDI data on 74% of our people. This has provided better insight and understanding of protected characteristics and associated trends within our workforce, informing report such as our annual pay gap review.

We incorporated Equality Impact Assessments within our policy and procedure development.

In addition to our statutory requirements for reporting our gender pay gap, we continue to report on disability and ethnicity pay gaps for our people:

- Gender - Mean: 8.82% (up 1.42% from 7.4%)
- Disability - Mean: -3.2 %
- Ethnicity - Mean: 7.8 % (up 0.4% from 7.4%)

## Senior management pay

Salaries for the Chief Executive and the executive team are set and reviewed by the Remuneration committee, which is a sub-committee of our Board of Trustees. The benefits



available are in line with other employees', and pay is externally benchmarked in a similar way.

Sense is a complex organisation which works across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our workforce is engaged in a wide variety of work. As well as providing specialist personalised support to help people communicate and make the most of their potential, we work in education, campaigning and supporter engagement. Meanwhile, our retail arm runs over 100 shops in England and Wales. Our subsidiary organisation, Sense International, works with partners in East Africa, parts of Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

## **The governance of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

During the year 2023/24, and up to the adoption of the annual report and financial statements by the Board, there have been 14 Trustees, some of whom were in post for part of the year. Trustees are also (for the purposes of company law) Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. Their names are set out within the section 'The Sense Group' later in this report.

Under the current Articles, Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees and can serve two terms of four years. Those co-opted can be reappointed annually, up to a maximum of eight years.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) usually meets four times a year and Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings.

### **Sub-committees**

- The Board is supported by four sub-committees: Finance and Audit, Remuneration, Nominations and Engagement. Each sub-committee has written Terms of Reference, which are reviewed as necessary and included in the Governance Handbook. The Board appoints the members of the sub-committees annually and receives either the minutes from their meetings, or reports of their activities, with any recommendations.



## **Finance and Audit sub-committee**

The Finance and Audit sub-committee's main purposes are to:

- Ensure that financial resources are deployed appropriately in furtherance of the charity's strategic objectives.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of Sense's internal and external auditing procedures and outcomes.
- Report to and advise the Board on all matters within the purview of the Committee.

Committee membership comprises at least three Trustees, in addition to the Chair (the Honorary Treasurer). Apart from Trustees, the committee can co-opt new members who they feel will bring relevant financial expertise.

The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources attend the meetings.

## **Nominations sub-committee**

The role of the Nominations sub-committee is to:

- Identify skills gaps in the membership of the Board of Trustees.
- Oversee the recruitment process of Board members and recommend prospective Trustees to the Board for appointment or co-option, ensuring that, once appointed, they have an appropriate induction.

Membership of the sub-committee comprises at least one other Trustee, in addition to the Chair. The Chief Executive and the Head of Governance attend the meetings.

Prospective Trustees are interviewed by the Nominations sub-committee and, if successful, their appointment is recommended to the Board. With the agreement of the Chair, nominees are invited to a Board meeting as observers. Following this, with the agreement of the Board, they are appointed or co-opted as Trustees.

New Trustees receive a comprehensive induction pack. An appropriate induction plan is also put in place, which involves meetings with senior staff, internal and external training as necessary, and visits to Sense's services as appropriate.



## Remuneration sub-committee

The Remuneration sub-committee ensures that:

- Sense's remuneration strategy for the Chief Executive and members of the executive team, and its implementation, is perceived by all stakeholders to be transparent, fair and effective.
- Total remuneration is commensurate with personal and corporate performance and market expectations.
- Overall packages enable Sense to recruit suitably skilled, qualified and experienced people.

The membership of the sub-committee comprises the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, with a minimum of two members also needed to hold any meeting. The Chief Executive is a non-voting ex officio member but is not present for discussions regarding their own remuneration. The Director of People may be asked to attend for certain items.

## Engagement sub-committee

The Engagement sub-committee is responsible for:

- Advising the Board about fundraising and marketing matters.
- Monitoring the implementation of our engagement strategy.
- Providing oversight of key activity, campaigns and outcomes.
- Making recommendations about plans and activities.

The sub-committee has at least one member in addition to the Chair and can co-opt external members. The meetings are attended by the Group Director of Engagement.

## Executive team

The Board delegates day-to-day operational management of the organisation to the Chief Executive. The broad areas of delegation, for which the Chief Executive is accountable, have been agreed by the Board and are set out in the Governance Handbook.

To ensure these responsibilities are discharged effectively, the Chief Executive is responsible for appointing, managing and developing senior staff to take direct



responsibility for these areas, and for putting in place appropriate reporting and assurance mechanisms.

The executive team meets regularly and includes the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operational Services, Group Director of Finance and Resources, Group Director of Engagement, four other functional Directors and the Head of Governance and Executive Support.

### The Governance Handbook

In addition to the areas covered above (terms of reference and delegated matters), the 'Governance Handbook' also includes sections on the values of Sense; our commitment to diversity; the appointment of Trustees; role profiles for the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and other Trustees; the Trustee induction process; Trustee Code of Conduct; Trustee conflict of interest policy and the Board's agenda cycle. We currently use the 7th edition of this, which was approved by the Board in March 2022.

### The Charity Governance Code

The Charity Governance Code specifies that the boards of large charities should publish a brief statement in their annual report, on how they use the code under the seven principles. We have detailed our approaches to 'Organisational Purpose' (Page 7 and 32), 'Leadership' (Page 33), 'Integrity' (as noted within our Governance Handbook) and 'Openness and Accountability' within the information provided within this report. To note the three outstanding principles:

#### **Principle 4: Decision making, risk and control**

As detailed on Page 27, Sense has a robust governance structure. Led by the needs of the organisation, Trustees meet quarterly as a Board and in addition will sit on various other Committees to provide oversight and decision making within the remit of each Committee otherwise decisions will be taken as recommended actions to the full Board of Trustees.



## **Principle 5: Board effectiveness**

The last internal Board review, which took place in 2021, concluded that the Board operates very efficiently, creating a positive and transparent working atmosphere and making decisions well as a team.

We plan to undertake annual Board and sub board reviews from 2024/25 onwards.

## **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

The Board is committed to having a diverse membership, with a reasonable balance across areas including race, gender, age, involvement of people with complex disabilities or their family members, and people from various professional backgrounds.

The Governance review in 2021 identified the need to increase the diversity of Trustees, noting the under-representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and the importance of recruiting Trustees with a lived experience of disabilities. A Trustee with lived experience of disability was appointed as a result and further recruitment is planned for 2024/25.

The Board continues to receive updates on the progress of the EDI strategy and, by extending the software package for recruitment to volunteers, we will be gathering data for all volunteers – including Trustees – going forward.

## **Public benefit**

Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The information about our services and achievements contained in this report gives clear examples of how our work is beneficial and brings public benefit. Our objectives for next year show that Sense will continue to provide public benefit in line with our objects.



## The Sense Group

### Working together

The Sense Group comprises two discrete legal entities: Sense and Sense International, in addition to the subsidiaries as set out below.

Both Sense and Sense International are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee in England and Wales, with their own Boards and Memorandum and Articles. The objects of both charities are similar in referring to supporting people who are deafblind and have sensory impairments.

Our shared vision is a world where no one who is deafblind or has complex disabilities is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Each organisation runs its own activities to work towards this vision.

Information about Sense International is given below, but additional details can be found in their own annual report and financial statements.

Sense is the trading name of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association, which is a registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 289868) and a company limited by guarantee (company number: 01825301). It is governed by its Articles of Association.

Sense works primarily in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the Corporate Trustee of the Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham). It is the sole member of Sense International and Sense4Enterprise Limited, and also holds 100% of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited. The Objects approved in 2021 are set out in Article 3 as follows:

### 3. Objects

The objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:

3.1 primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments;



3.2 and to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support

(together, the "beneficiaries").

**Sense International** is a registered charity (charity number 1076497), a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986) and is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association. It works on a global basis, raising the needs of people with deafblindness and working with partner organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Sense is the only member of Sense International.

Sense has the following of subsidiaries:

**Helping Sense Limited** is Sense's trading company (company number: 02214430). It is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association, and its main activity is the sale of goods through Sense's charity shops. The profits from its activities are donated to Sense.

**Sense4Enterprise Limited** (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities.

**The Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham)** is a registered charity (charity number: 528908). The Charity Commission granted a linking order, permitting its activities to be reported within Sense's report without the need to file its own separate annual report and financial statements. It is governed by its trust deed but does not operate in its own right. This subsidiary did not trade in the year.

This is the consolidated annual report and financial statements for all the Sense organisations. Sense International publishes its own annual reports and financial statements that describe its activities and finances in more detail.

Helping Sense Limited and Sense4Enterprise Limited, have taken advantage of the exemption available under Section 479 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the



requirement for audit. As a condition of the exemption, the Company has guaranteed the year-end liabilities of the relevant subsidiaries until they are settled in full.

Sense subsidiaries HSL Ltd and S4E Ltd complete statutory accounts that are lodged with Companies House, however not available on our website.

### **Members of the Board from 1 April 2023 to the present**

**Dr Justin Molloy** (Chair) (member of Remuneration sub-committee)

**Andrew Pearson** (Chair of Finance and Audit sub-committee) (member of Engagement and Remuneration sub-committees, also member of Trading Board) (Resigned 15 December 2023)

**Saeed Ahmed**

**Ashling Barvé** (Resigned 8 June 2023)

**Mark Cammies** (member of Finance and Audit and Engagement subcommittees, also member of Trading Board)

**Ben Cooper** (member of Nominations sub-committee)

**Vivienne Hoskins** (also member of Trading Board)

**Simon Jones** (Chair of Finance and Audit sub-committee from December 2023)

**Mythily Katsaris** (member of Finance and Audit sub-committee)

**Benedict Leigh** (Resigned 9 June 2023)

**Amanda Mortensen** (Appointed 26 April 2023, resigned 19 September 2023)

**Brian Symington**

**Nathan Taylor** (also member of Sense College Board)

**Mark Westwell** (member of Nominations and Engagement sub-committees)

During this year there were four female and ten male Trustees/Directors.



## Sense International Board from 1 April 2023 to the present

**Raaxeet Shah** (Chair)

**Sunil Shah** (Treasurer)

**Maria Arce-Moreira** (resigned 20 December 2023)

**Richard Cooper**

**Nicholas Corby**

**Mythily Katsaris**

**Suzi Nandera** (appointed 6 April 2023)

**Lucy Roberts** (resigned 3 October 2023)

**Lisa Szucs** (appointed 6 April 2023)

**Kiran Virdee** (appointed 6 April 2023)

**Lauren Watters**

**Gillian Wood**

During the year there were seven female and five male Trustees/Directors.

## Sense executive team

**Richard Kramer** – Chief Executive (also Chief Executive of Sense International)

**Maria Horton** – Group Director of Operations

**Catherine Still** – Group Director of Finance and Resources

**Louise Robertshaw** – Group Director of Engagement

**Kavita Prasad** – Director of Sense International

**Adrian Darkin** – Director of Trading



**Emma Evans** – Director of People

**Dave Rutt** – Director of Data, Insight and Technology

In the year, there were five female and three male members of the executive team.

## **Other information: Legal and Administrative Details**

### **Registered address - Sense and Sense International**

101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG United Kingdom Tel: 0300 330 9250

Email: [facilities@sense.org.uk](mailto:facilities@sense.org.uk)

Websites: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

<https://www.senseinternational.org.uk>

### **Sense Information and Advice**

For details about the support and services Sense offers – and information about deafblindness and complex disabilities – please contact:

Tel: 0300 330 9256

Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

### **Sense Northern Ireland**

Sense Family Centre

The Manor House

51 Mallusk Road

Newtownabbey

County Antrim BT36 4RU

Tel/text: 028 9083 3430

Email: [nienquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:nienquiries@sense.org.uk)

### **Sense Cymru**

TouchBase Wales

Caerphilly Business Park

Van Road

Caerphilly, CF83 3ED

Ffôn/tel: 0300 330 9280



Testud/text: 0300 330 9282

Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)

**Sense:** Registered number 1825301

**Registered charity number** 289868

## Professional advisers

### Independent auditors

#### **PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**

1 Embankment Place, London WC2N 6RH

### Bankers

#### **National Westminster Bank PLC**

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JA

#### **Lloyds Banking Group plc**

33 Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1HZ

### Solicitors

#### **Wilsons Solicitors LLP**

Alexandra House

St John Street

Salisbury SP1 2SB

#### **Trowers & Hamlins LLP**

3 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8YZ

### Insurance advisers

#### **Willis Towers Watson**

8 First Street

Floor 6

Manchester M15 4RP



## Section 172 statement

Sense is required by the Companies Act 2006 to make an annual statement about how Directors have 'promoted the success of the company', having regard to the following matters set out in Section 172 of that Act:

### **a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term**

This is a fundamental consideration in relation to any major decisions made by the Board. Last year the Board focused heavily on the national increase in the cost of living and the effects it has had on the people we support and how we operate.

### **b) The interests of the company's employees**

Last year, we completed an employee survey. This identified three key areas, which we then responded to. These were:

- Communication. We have put in place an internal communications plan and send regular communications across the organisation, as well as using and sign posting colleagues to our intranet.
- Valuing colleagues. We have developed and promoted our employee benefits package, as well as setting up and encouraging involvement with our employee networks, which include Disability, LGBTQ+, Wellbeing and Ethnic Diversity.
- Leadership. Sense has worked with Positive Dynamics to develop a Leadership Framework which is linked to our strategy, as well as 'enabling objectives' to create a more cohesive approach to appraising and developing staff.

### **c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

Our key stakeholders are the people we support across all our services and their families. We regularly communicate with our suppliers. Other important stakeholders are our supporters and volunteers. We continue to work with other charities in our sector and the Board, and Engagement sub-committee are regularly updated about these relationships.



#### **d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**

One of the key aims of our services is to enable the people we support to feel part of their local communities. Our trading arm also builds strong community links through our shops, which act as important ambassadors for Sense. The shops hold fun weeks, enabling members of the public to take part in activities and to learn more about Sense and the people we support. The shops also sell items which would otherwise go to landfill – an important contribution to the environment (and in line with Sense's Environment Policy). Our Trading Board is attended by the Chair of the Finance and Audit sub-committee and other Trustees and receives regular reports on community activities.

#### **e) The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

The good reputation of Sense, both in terms of our services and our business relationships, is critical to our long-term future. Our services are scrutinised not only by our quality team, but by the Quality and Safeguarding Boards, which both have an external Chair and members, with direct input from Trustees. We also have a Whistleblowing Policy in place, giving access to an independent external organisation. The Finance and Audit sub-committee has responsibility for monitoring the impact of the Policy.

#### **f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company**

Sense has almost 1,000 company members. In line with our constitution, we have not held an AGM for the last three years. We send a letter from the Chair to our members setting out the key issues discussed by the Board over the year. This goes to all active supporters of Sense, rather than just Company members.

### **Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.



Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group, and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company/group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2019).
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company’s transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company’s website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.



In accordance with Section 418, Directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each Director in office at the date the Directors' report is approved, that:

- So far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company and the group's auditors are unaware.
- They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee, in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

### Internal financial controls

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, financial and otherwise, in place. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A five-year strategic plan and an annual budget approved by the Board. A number of matters are specifically reserved for the Board's approval.
- Regular consideration of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and the Board.
- The development of policy documents covering all major strategic and operational activities. The executive team reviews these with appropriate regularity and consultation.

### Anti-bribery policy

Sense has an anti-bribery policy, which sets out the definition of bribery and makes it the responsibility of all employees and Trustees to prevent and report any bribery issues. If necessary, this can be through Sense's Whistleblowing Policy which provides a number of possible contacts, including an external organisation.



## Financial review of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association 2023/24

### Overview

This was a challenging year for Sense, with an unfavourable retail environment in our shops more than offsetting a year on year increase in fundraising income. Income in our accommodation and day services held up despite much negotiation with commissioners on fee increases to support the increase in the National Living Wage, and increased running costs. We increased numbers in our education provision. However, the high street proved difficult for us this year and income in our trading arm across our shops was lower than we had hoped. It still represented an increase in income compared to the previous year, reflecting the benefit of the new shops opened in the year.

There was continued pressure on costs, including the National Living Wage increase which saw pay rates increase by 9.7% from £9.50 to £10.42, which we reflected in the best salary increase we could afford. Utility costs stabilised and ceased to present a risk to our financial wellbeing. It is still a challenging environment however, and pressure remains on our social care fees with another 9.7% increase in National Living Wage in April 2024, leading to another round of difficult conversations with hard pressed commissioners.

Sense remains well resourced with healthy levels of cash and reserves, and a strong asset base.

### Financial highlights

This year saw another significant increase in income from commissioned services of £5.7 million, but again this largely reflects the high level of increase in these fees directly linked to the increase in National Living Wage. Apart from the increase in income linked to fees, our provision did grow in the year as we were able to attract more students to our education provision, and also the demand for day services was strong. We opened our Denbigh hub delivering commissioned services for adults and charitably funded services for children. We opened our Loughborough hub delivering charitably funded services for various groups from our thriving education facility.

The costs of providing services increased substantially in the year, mainly driven by pay rates and salaries. Increases in inflation also affected us, with many of our invoiced costs



increasing to reflect the higher wage rates that all organisations experienced last year.

Apart from inflation, expenditure on programmes again increased, by £0.4 million to £3.7 million (2023: £3.3 million) and this reflects our expansion into two hubs as well as more investment in our early intervention and family support programmes. We also increased expenditure on providing holidays for those we support, made possible by our fantastic volunteers.

Towards the end of the year we invested in management for our volunteers with a view to becoming more effective in recruiting, onboarding and getting value from our volunteers whilst also providing a meaningful opportunity for people to contribute to our important work.

We opened 14 new shops in the year, and we closed 4 underperforming shops, meaning that we ended the year with 137 shops trading. Despite this, income did not reach planned levels whilst costs increased, leading to a below expectation performance from the shops.

Income from fundraising increased year on year, with a particular increase in philanthropy income. Income from legacies reduced in the year however as we saw longer delays in the probate process affecting the timing of receipt of donations. Income for Sense International increased in the year with more money secured from grants to deliver vital services.

In the year we also invested in building up our skills in technology to support significant development plans to improve our use of our data assets. We have designated reserves to allow investment in this area in the future. We are in the process of investing in our fundraising CRM.

We invested resources and systems in building up our capacity and capability in recruiting and managing our volunteers, whilst also providing a meaningful opportunity for people to contribute to our important work.

The above investments in the skills and capacity of our support functions accounts for the small rise in support costs to £7.0 million (2023: £6.7 million).



The loss of £2.2 million reduced reserves to £48.6 million (2023: £50.8 million) of which £3.1 million (2023: £2.8 million) is restricted and £5.0 million (2023: £8.5 million) is designated, leaving £40.1 million unrestricted (2023: £39.1 million).

Cash levels reduced in the year as we invested as planned in our buildings and opened new shops in line with our strategic plan to increase contribution from retail by focussing on the best locations for trading. Cash reduced by £4.6 million in the year to £10.1 million (2023: £14.7 million).

## Reserves

The Trustees regularly review free reserves to ensure that there are adequate funds to support all the activity that Sense Group undertakes. This review reflects the need to maintain a considerable property estate in order to continue to provide the high quality of services to the people we support, to fund investment projects to grow services and to ensure an adequate contingency is maintained for unforeseen events, especially given the recent pandemic impact.

This year Designated Reserves have been set by the Trustees at £5.0 million (2023: £8.5 million) reflecting planned investments in service delivery, digital development and our hubs programme.

We also consider unforeseen risks when setting a minimum level of free reserves. We define free reserves as unrestricted reserves minus fixed assets (offset by borrowings taken out to support the purchase of those assets) minus any designated reserves as follows:

Sense Group Free Reserves £ks	Mar 24	Mar-23
<b>Unrestricted Reserves</b>	<b>45,437</b>	<b>47,987</b>
Minus fixed assets offset by long term borrowings	(35,843)	(33,928)
Minus designated reserves	(5,000)	(8,500)
<b>Total Free Reserves</b>	<b>4,594</b>	<b>5,559</b>

Free reserves at March 2024 were £4.6 million (2023: £5.5 million), reflecting the investment we made in fixed assets in the year. After considering various scenarios and the risks attached to each of our income streams, the Trustees consider that minimum free reserves of £4.2 million are required (2023: £4.7 million). Trustees therefore consider our reserves to be in excess of our minimum target.



## Going concern

The financial statements show that our cash and reserves position means that we are able to fund foreseeable operational and capital expenditure: last year we eliminated all long term debt and liabilities, including the pension liability. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and the risks that might threaten those forecasts.

Sense Group provides a letter of support to Sense International which pledges to provide financial support to Sense International if it is unable to operate as a going concern, and to settle its liabilities as they fall due. This is reviewed as part of the going concern analysis.

Together with our risk management policies, the strong reserves position and no indebtedness allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and that therefore it is appropriate to continue to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

## Pensions

Following the exit from the deficit funding agreement with the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) in September 2022, Sense no longer has any liability attached to a defined benefit pension scheme. All obligations to the Fund were satisfied in the prior year.

## Ethical investments

Where relevant, Sense aims to hold ethical investments that are consistent with its charitable objectives.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for the management of risks to the Chief Executive and the executive team.

The executive team is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk, including those identified on departmental risk registers, and for reporting on this to the Finance and Audit sub-committee. The executive team is also responsible for developing risk mitigation strategies and controls, and for implementing actions to minimise or reduce risk to acceptable levels. The risk register is reviewed at every executive team meeting, and the



departmental risk registers are reviewed by each executive for their areas. The executive team agree which department-specific risks should be included on the corporate risk register.

The Finance and Audit sub-committee is responsible for overseeing the establishment and maintenance of good practice in this area, and for reporting to the Board at each of its meetings when the corporate risk register is reviewed.

<b>Uncertainty/risk</b>	<b>Possible consequences</b>	<b>Controls being implemented</b>
Trading: Sales income does not grow or reduces, and new shops do not achieve planned income targets	Contribution from the shops reduces or becomes loss making and trading stops being a net contributor to Sense	Trading strategy focusses on increasing donations, pricing structures and increasing sales, along with ensuring receipts from gift aid are maximized. We have introduced new processes to ensure that costs are understood and controlled. We are making efficiencies in our central costs and will constantly examine the portfolio of shops to ensure that we have an efficient operation that maximises our central infrastructure. We close loss making shops.
In fundraising, we fail to grow the number of supporters actively engaged with us.	Voluntary income reduces, restricting the amount we can invest in bringing services to our beneficiaries free of charge.	We have produced a three year strategy and are investing in our CRM system, and activities to acquire new supporters and ensure we fully engage with existing supporters. We have started face to face fundraising. We are considering our brand awareness and how to increase our impact.



<p>Sense is subject to, or experiences disruption from a significant cyber-attack</p>	<p>Sense systems are unavailable impacting on service delivery. There is a significant data breach or inability to communicate which leads to financial loss. There is severe reputational impact with regulatory and contractual implications</p>	<p>We have introduced Cyber Security systems including firewalls, endpoint protection, access controls, Multi-Factor authentication for users. We have Cyber insurance. We regularly review processes and responses to incidents with independent CISO support from an expert supplier. We work with existing suppliers to review security arrangements. All staff are required to undertake Cyber Security training every 6 months.</p>
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## Energy and carbon report 2023/24

The table below gives a summary of our energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions for the financial year 2023/24, and also compares with the data from 2022/23 and 2021/22.

SENSE - GHG Emissions and Energy Use Data for Period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Energy/Activity	Scope - GHG Protocol Corporate Standard	Period 2023/24				Period 2022/23				Variance v 2022/23			Variance v 2021/22		
		kWh	Emission Factor	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	Emission Factor	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %
Combustion of Natural Gas	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	4,260,094	0.18000	766.8	32.49%	4,601,487	0.18000	828.3	35.10%	-341,393	-61.5	-7.4%	-696,441	-141.0	-14.1%
Combustion of Oil	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	310,241	0.25000	77.6	3.29%	132,492	0.25000	33.1	1.40%	177,749	44.5	134.2%	89,202	23.0	40.4%
Transport Own Vehicles (Diesel)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	1,763,840	0.24000	423.3	17.94%	1,744,309	0.24000	418.6	17.74%	19,531	4.7	1.1%	230,456	60.1	16.0%
Transport Own Vehicles (Petrol)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	654,140	0.22000	143.9	6.10%	795,694	0.23000	183.0	7.76%	-141,554	-39.1	-17.8%	350,896	74.2	115.7%
	<b>Scope 1 - TOTALS</b>	<b>6,988,315</b>		<b>1,411.6</b>	<b>59.82%</b>	<b>7,273,982</b>		<b>1,463.0</b>	<b>62.00%</b>	<b>-285,667</b>	<b>-51.4</b>	<b>-3.9%</b>	<b>-25,887</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
Electricity	Scope 2 (Energy Indirect)	3,301,599	0.20707	683.7	28.97%	3,935,187	0.19338	761.0	32.25%	-633,588	-77.3	-16.1%	-614,559	-147.8	-15.7%
Transport - employee-owned vehicles business travel	Scope 3 (Other Indirect)	920,882	0.22800	210.0	8.90%	580,326	0.23400	135.8	5.75%	340,556	74.2	58.7%	334,353	73.5	57.0%
<b>TOTALS (Gross)</b>		<b>11,210,796</b>		<b>2,305.3</b>	<b>97.69%</b>	<b>11,789,495</b>		<b>2,359.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-578,699</b>	<b>-54.5</b>	<b>-4.9%</b>	<b>-306,093</b>	<b>-58.0</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>
<b>Buildings Intensity Ratio (kWh/m2 &amp; tCO2/m2)</b>		159				166				-7		-4.4%	-3		-2.1%
<b>Transport Intensity Ratio (kWh/FTE &amp; tCO2/FTE)</b>		1,741				1,603				138		8.6%	264		17.9%

### Emission Changes v 2022/23

Sense have experienced a reduction of **4.9%** in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions when compared to 2022/23. This has mainly been reflected in the building use, where both gas and electricity consumption has significantly reduced. While building floor area has marginally reduced, the intensity Ratio reflects that good work has been implemented in reducing energy consumption. The respective building intensity ratio has decreased from 166 to 159 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> (a reduction of 4.4%).

Scope 1 Transport emissions have witnessed a 4.8% reduction.

As a result of these comparisons the following observations are noted:

- The property floor area has slightly reduced from the figures reported in 2021/22:
  - 56,030m<sup>2</sup> in 2021/22
  - 52,169m<sup>2</sup> in 2022/23
  - 49,530m<sup>2</sup> in 2023/24



2. Gas consumption has reduced by circa 7.4% The witnessed gas reduction is believed to be associated the improved energy measures introduced to the number of the properties within the portfolio.
3. Oil consumption represents a very small proportion of the estates emissions but has seen a significant percentage increase (134.2%). This is however believed to be due the method of recording consumption. Currently no meters are in place and consumption is based in delivery notes. Site delivery data is not truly reflective of site consumption and therefore year on year variances will occur until such time as we are able to install consumption meters to these locations.
4. When the data for 2023/24 is compared with 2020/21 data, it can be seen that both diesel and petrol emissions fell over the COVID pandemic. However, as the business has now returned to normal working practices, the transport impacts have risen back to pre-covid levels. The current figures however have reflected the migration away from a diesel fleet to petrol. It is also recognised that the Scope 3 'employee owned vehicle' emissions has increased, which is representative of the change in property portfolio and the geographical locations of such properties dictating greater transport requirements.

## **Company Information**

Sense is a registered Charity No. 289868. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England & Wales No. 01825301. Registered office at 101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG.

## **The Reporting period**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## **Organisational Boundaries**

We have used the Financial Control model as the basis to calculate our emissions, including everything that we own and operate within England & Wales.

## **Quantification and Reporting Methodology**

We have followed the UK HM Government "Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance June 2023". We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard.



Data has been gathered from the following sources:

Gas Combustion – Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.

Oil Combustion – Supplier delivery quantities (litres) for all fuels.

Electricity - Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.

Transport – Own Fleet – Finance records for litres of fuel (Petrol & Diesel) purchased.

Transport – Business Mileage employee own vehicles – Individual employee expense claim records for business mileages during the reporting period. We have then used the “average car: unknown fuel” factors to calculate kWh & tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

In calculating the emissions we have used the UK Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, conversion factors 2023:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2023>

### **Intensity Ratios**

For all our property energy usage we have chosen a ratio based on the Floor Area GIA.

For our transport energy usage we have chosen a ratio based on our number of employees (FTE).

### **Energy Efficiency Action**

The past year, we have continued our intense action regarding the organisation’s aims of reducing energy consumption and carbon output.

The Organisation continues its goal of being carbon neutral by 2040 and has a dedicated team, and a budget to carry out carbon and energy reduction projects.



The major contributors to carbon output (property, fleet and supply chain) are under the direct management of the Sense Property Team. This has enabled a more coordinated approach involving the whole Organisation.

We continue to implement a fully inclusive environment strategy and has published a new Environmental Policy.

We still encourage an agile working approach to the office environment, which has released office space to enable us to incorporate another charity tenant increasing the more efficient use of floor space. This approach has been also rolled out in our major offices in Crayford and Wakefield.

When we extend our property portfolio i.e., new buildings (shops, warehouses etc) we continue our standard specification incorporating low energy measures, and as a minimum include LED lighting and thermostatically controlled heating and increased insulation where appropriate.

Our trading operation recycles more than 5,500 tonnes per annum of clothing and furniture and there are plans to increase this. We will be working closely on improving our recycling rates across our portfolio.

We continue to engage specialist consultants to carry out energy audits on our freehold property portfolio. This has resulted in a program of energy-saving initiatives including roof insulation and LED lighting.

93% of our meters have now been upgraded to smart meters and we will continue to change the remaining meters to 'smart' meters. The software that compliments this project will give us on demand information and correct readings. We will be able to analyse the power usage which in turn will help us to make informed decisions regarding future energy reduction projects.

As part of our planned maintenance budget, our approach has been to take up any opportunity to improve our energy efficiency. Where boilers, windows, and roofs need replacement, this will always be based on A and A+ units where applicable and upgrading to current Building Regulation standards.



We are currently instructing a further two solar arrays to add to our existing installations.

We continue to profile usage and the suitability of electric battery powered vehicles instead of fossil fuel. We have 2 hybrid vehicles in our fleet.

We continue to ensure our supply chain adopt the same overall environmental aims and we apply an environmental/sustainability factor along with cost when choosing suppliers.

We have submitted the compliance notification for ESOS Phase 3 and will review and implement any recommendations in the report where appropriate and cost-effective.

We will continue to look at our use of energy and encourage change and change behaviour with regards to energy use.

### **Assurance & Verification**

This report and the verification of the data was undertaken by an external independent CIBSE qualified Low Carbon Consultant and Elmhurst ESOS Lead Assessor.

The Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by;

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Molloy".

Dr Justin Molloy, Chair

18 November 2024



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# Independent auditors' report to the members of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

## Report on the audit of the financial statements

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### Opinion

In our opinion, Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association's group financial statements and parent charitable company financial statements (the "financial statements"):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's and parent charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, and of the group's cash flows, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Annual Report and Financial Statements (the "Annual Report"), which comprise: the consolidated balance sheet and company balance sheet as at 31 March 2024; the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated summary income and expenditure account and the consolidated cash flow statement for the year then ended; the accounting policies; and the notes to the financial statements.

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### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Independence

We remained independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, which includes the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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### Conclusions relating to going concern

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the groups and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the groups and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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### Reporting on other information

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed,



we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

With respect to the Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees, we also considered whether the disclosures required by the UK Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 have been included.

Based on our work undertaken in the course of the audit, the Companies Act 2006 requires us also to report certain opinions and matters as described below.

### *Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report*

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit the information given in the Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report, for the period ended 31 March 2024 is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we did not identify any material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The trustees are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and its industry/environment, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Charities Act 2011, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- enquiring of management and the Board of Trustees, including consideration of any known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Finance and Audit Committee;
- identifying and testing journal entries, including journal entries posted with unusual account combinations to income; and
- assessing financial statement disclosures, and testing to supporting documentation, for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations or through collusion.



A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditors' report.

### *Use of this report*

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the parent charitable company's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

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## **Other required reporting**

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### **Companies Act 2006 exception reporting**

Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- we have not obtained all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.

*DChan*

Daniel Chan (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
London  
18 November 2024



## Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2024 £000s	Total 2023 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	9,763	4,214	-	13,977	12,875
Charitable activities	1	63,295	1,111	-	64,406	59,154
Trading	1	15,750	-	-	15,750	13,708
Investment income	2	469	2	-	471	299
Other income	3	372	-	-	372	491
<b>Total income</b>		<b>89,649</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>94,976</b>	<b>86,527</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Raising funds	4	6,399	-	-	6,399	5,580
Charitable activities		69,420	4,257	-	73,677	69,667
Trading		16,584	-	-	16,584	13,917
Other		813	-	-	813	1,081
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>93,216</b>	<b>4,257</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>97,473</b>	<b>90,245</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	5	304	-	-	304	52
Transfers between funds	18	706	(706)	-	-	-
<b>Net (expense)/income before pension settlement</b>		<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>(3,666)</b>
Settlement of defined benefit pension scheme	6,10	-	-	-	-	(2,675)
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension scheme	10	-	-	-	-	11,676
<b>Net gain on settlement of defined benefit pension scheme</b>	10	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,001</b>
<b>Net (decrease) / increase in funds</b>	7	<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>5,335</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward	18	47,636	2,773	351	50,760	45,425
Net (decrease) / increase in funds	18	(2,557)	353	1	(2,192)	5,335
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>	18	<b>45,085</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>48,563</b>	<b>50,760</b>

The net income of unrestricted funds is analysed between the general fund and designated funds.



## Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	35,843	33,928
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>35,843</b>	<b>33,928</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		666	697
Debtors	13	11,253	10,425
Investments	14	4,000	9,000
Cash at bank and in hand		6,144	5,667
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>22,063</b>	<b>25,789</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	15	(9,319)	(8,925)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>12,744</b>	<b>16,864</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>48,587</b>	<b>50,792</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	16	(24)	(32)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>48,563</b>	<b>50,760</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
General fund	18	40,085	39,136
Designated funds	18	5,000	8,500
Restricted funds	18	3,126	2,773
Endowment fund	18	352	351
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>48,563</b>	<b>50,760</b>

The notes on pages 66 to 91 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 55 to 91 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 18 November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Simon Jones, Treasurer  
Registered company number 1825301



## Company balance sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	35,823	33,899
Investments	12	30	30
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>35,853</b>	<b>33,929</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		666	697
Debtors	13	11,368	10,060
Investments	14	4,000	9,000
Cash at bank and in hand		5,098	5,258
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>21,132</b>	<b>25,015</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	15	(9,154)	(8,798)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>11,978</b>	<b>16,217</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>47,831</b>	<b>50,146</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	16	-	-
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>47,831</b>	<b>50,146</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>47,831</b>	<b>50,146</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>			
General fund	18	39,755	38,618
Designated funds	18	5,000	8,500
Restricted funds	18	2,724	2,677
Endowment fund	18	352	351
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>47,831</b>	<b>50,146</b>

The notes on pages 66 to 91 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 55 to 91 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 18 November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Simon Jones, Treasurer  
Registered company number 1825301



## Consolidated summary income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Income	94,505	86,280
Total expenditure of operations	(97,473)	(90,068)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	(2,968)	(3,788)
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	304	52
Interest receivable and similar income	471	299
Interest payable and similar charges	-	(236)
Net interest and administration costs of defined benefit scheme	-	(41)
Remeasurement of pension on cessation of scheme	-	(2,633)
<b>Net (expense)/income for the year</b>	<b>(2,193)</b>	<b>(6,347)</b>

## Consolidated cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Cash flows from operating activities			
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>	23	<b>39</b>	<b>(3,394)</b>
Cash flows from Investing activities:			
Interest received		471	299
Interest paid		-	(236)
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets		574	63
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(5,607)	(5,307)
Gain on interest rate swap closed		-	233
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(4,562)</b>	<b>(4,948)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities:</b>			
Repayments of borrowing		-	(5,333)
Refund of defined benefit scheme surplus		-	8,634
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>3,301</b>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period (including short term deposits)		(4,523)	(5,041)
Change in cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period (including short term deposits)		14,667	19,708
Change in cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (including short term deposits)	26	10,144	14,667



## Accounting policies of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association

### Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Accounting and Reporting for Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, which is applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2020) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act from presenting its individual statement of financial activities.

The net expense of the charity for the year was £2,193k.

### Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### Preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis

The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and have also taken account of the risks that might threaten the expected position. Trustees have reviewed the forecasts in the light of severe and plausible downsides such as loss of retail income or inadequate fee increase to cover increased costs and conclude that revenue and capital expenditure will be covered even if such adverse circumstances occur. Trustees have also reviewed the risk register in detail during the year including a review of risk mitigation strategies. Given our risk management policies and strong reserves position, the Trustees believe that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and therefore it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.



## Group financial statements

These financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiaries: Sense International, Helping Sense Limited, and Sense4Enterprise Limited.

### Income recognition

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Fees and allowances receivable for residential care and similar services are accounted for in the period in which the service is provided. Trading income represents goods supplied to customers at invoiced amounts and is recognised at the time of sale. Legacy income is recognised on a receivable basis or when it is probable that legacy income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants received in advance which include donor-imposed conditions that specify a time period in which the expenditure of resources can take place are accounted for as deferred income and recognised as a liability.

Donations and legacies are recognised as income when received, except when the income is related to major events. Non-cash donations, other than goods donated for sale through shops, are stated at an estimate of their value to the charity.

### Expenditure

All expenditure, including any irrecoverable VAT, is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

The cost of generating funds represents the cost of organising fundraising events and activities and the operating costs of the charity's shops. The cost of charitable activities includes all expenditure directly relating to the objects of the charity. Support costs are apportioned to the relevant charitable activity on the basis of salary costs incurred.

Governance costs (comprising internal and external audit, strategic costs and Trustees' expenses) are included in support costs.



## Grant income

Grants received are recognised as income. Accruals are made for any grants claimed but outstanding at year end.

## Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended use.

## Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful economic lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold property	2%
Short leasehold properties and long leasehold improvements	Over the remaining life of the lease
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Motor vehicles	25%

Freehold land is not depreciated. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are available for use. Individual fixed assets costing £500 or less are not capitalised.

## Leases

Operating lease rentals are expensed in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

## Stock

Stock relates to new and second-hand goods purchased for sale through the shops, valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Donated goods and Sense merchandise are valued at nil as their intrinsic value is immaterial.



## Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when an obligation arises to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

## Dilapidations

Provision is made for dilapidations in respect of leasehold properties, principally charity shops. The provision reflects an estimate of the costs to make good the leased property at the expiry of the lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. On expiry of a lease, any expenditure in excess of the accumulated provision is released.

## Pension costs

The Group operates defined contribution schemes for all staff. Contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), a multi-employer defined benefit scheme, are accounted for as a defined contribution scheme and are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Until September 2022 Sense was part of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) but involvement ceased on 30th September 2022. Pension costs in respect of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), a defined benefit pension scheme closed to new members, were accounted for in accordance with FRS 102 during 2022/23. As a result, changes in actuarial assumptions, expected investment return on assets and interest on pension liabilities, were charged to the statement of financial activities in that year.

Differences between actual and expected returns on assets, together with differences arising from changes in the assumptions underlying the present value of scheme liabilities and experience of gains and losses arising on scheme liabilities, were also recognised in the statement of financial activities in 2022/23. The difference between the market value of assets and the present value of future pension liabilities was shown as a provision on the balance sheet.

The Company formally exited the scheme in 2022/23.



## **Fixed assets: subsidiary undertakings**

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost and written down to their realisable value if there has been a permanent diminution in value.

## **Foreign currency**

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date.

Exchange differences are recognised within net income/(expenditure).

## **Allocation of funds**

General funds represent unrestricted funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds are those that have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes as detailed in the funds note. Restricted funds are funds that must be used in accordance with specific instructions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Endowment funds represent assets that must be held permanently by the charity, principally properties. Any capital gains or losses arising on sale of those assets forms part of the fund. Depreciation of endowed property is charged against the fund.

Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

## **Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.



## Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## Financial Instruments

Sense has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors and accrued income. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors and accruals.

## Investment Policy

Investments includes cash held on deposit for terms of between three months and one year.

The cash balances with Sense will be assessed taking on board the working capital needs and will be aligned with the cashflow projections.

To optimise the return on cash or short-term investments with minimum risk to their capital value. To retain sufficient liquid funds to enable Sense to meet its short-term obligations and to respond to any unplanned opportunities and crises that arise.

As at March 2024 Sense had £4m in short term deposits

## Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Specific bad debts are recognised and provided for as appropriate.

## Cost Allocation

Support costs not attributable to a single activity are allocated or apportioned on a basis consistent with identified cost drivers for that cost category. Cost drivers utilised include



head count, direct costs, and estimation and judgement is exercised in applying cost drivers to cost categories.

## **Principal accounting estimates and judgements**

In the application of these accounting policies, management is required to make judgments, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates, and the estimates, along with their underlying assumptions, are continually reviewed.

Legacies have been accounted for on a cash received basis. Pecuniary legacies that were notified at the year end but not received and residuary gifts where the estate has been finalised but cash not received amounted to £445k at March 2024. This income has not been accrued and will fall into financial year 2024/25.

Sense acts as an agent for its wholly-owned subsidiary, Helping Sense Limited, in respect of trading activities through its charity shops. This income is therefore recognised by Helping Sense Limited and costs borne by Sense are re-charged to Helping Sense Limited. Purchases of stock are made by Sense, which is held by the charity. This does not impact on the consolidated financial information.



# Notes to the financial statements of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, for the year ended 31 March 2024

## 1. Income

<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Donations		
Restricted	3,264	3,955
Unrestricted	6,499	6,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,763</b>	<b>10,118</b>
Legacies		
Unrestricted	4,214	2,757
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,977</b>	<b>12,875</b>

<b>Charitable activities</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Care and Support Midlands	13,572	12,325
Care and Support East	12,556	11,727
Care and Support South	14,714	14,735
Care and Support North	10,339	9,294
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,334	3,237
Care and Support Wales	2,212	1,985
Education and development programmes	6,585	4,067
International programmes	956	975
Arts and wellbeing programmes	10	663
Holidays and volunteering	126	135
Adult specialist services	-	6
Children's specialist services	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,406</b>	<b>59,154</b>

Income from charitable activities includes grants received for a specific purpose which have been spent entirely on that purpose as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>000s</b>
Sense	1,850	1,834
Sense International	960	980
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,814</b>



## 1. Income (cont'd)

Trading	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Sale of Goods	14,843	12,984
Gift Aid	740	662
Fundraising	132	28
Rent Received	35	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,750</b>	<b>13,708</b>

## 2. Investment income

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Bank interest	471	299

## 3. Other income

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
<b>Other Income</b>		
Miscellaneous income	372	491

Miscellaneous income represents training, advice and consultancy provided to other organisations and charities concerned with disability, rental of office and conference space income at Sense Touch Base Pears and Pentonville Road.

## 4. Expenditure 2023/24

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2024 £000s
Donations	6,089	310	6,399
Trading	16,542	43	16,585
TouchBase Pears	482	9	491
Care and Support Midlands	15,028	1,365	16,393
Care and Support East	11,477	1,174	12,651
Care and Support South	14,345	1,513	15,858
Care and Support North	9,389	1,026	10,415
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,062	322	3,384
Care and Support Wales	2,297	230	2,527
Education and development programmes	2,547	534	3,081
International programmes	2,453	145	2,598
Arts and wellbeing programmes	1,191	92	1,283
Holidays and volunteering	962	89	1,051
Adult specialist services	81	9	90
Children's specialist services	1,079	113	1,192



## 4. Expenditure 2023/24 (cont'd)

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2024 £000s
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,652	149	1,801
Quality assurance and development	1,120	121	1,241
Other	433	-	433
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,229</b>	<b>7,244</b>	<b>97,473</b>

### Analysis of apportioned support costs 2023/24

Activity	Facilities £000s	Management £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Governance £000s	Comms £000s	2024 £000s
Donations	20	14	98	99	2	77	310
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43
TouchBase	1	-	3	3	-	2	9
Care and Support Midlands	88	62	432	434	9	340	1,365
Care and Support East	76	54	371	373	8	292	1,174
Care and Support South	98	69	479	481	10	376	1,513
Care and Support North	66	47	325	326	7	255	1,026
Care and Support Northern Ireland	21	15	102	102	2	80	322
Care and Support Wales	15	11	73	73	1	57	230
Education programmes	35	24	169	170	3	133	534
International programmes	-	103	-	-	42	-	145
Arts and wellbeing programmes	6	4	29	29	1	23	92
Holidays and volunteering	6	4	28	28	1	22	89
Adult specialist services	1	-	3	3	-	2	9
Children's specialist services	7	5	36	36	1	28	113
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	10	7	47	47	1	37	149
Quality assurance and development	8	6	38	38	1	30	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>2,276</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>7,244</b>



## 4. Expenditure 2022/23

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2023 £000s
Fundraising	5,322	258	5,580
Trading	13,874	43	13,917
TouchBase Pears	1,029	4	1,033
Care and Support Midlands	13,680	1,205	14,885
Care and Support East	10,691	1,098	11,789
Care and Support South	13,092	1,361	14,453
Care and Support North	8,827	970	9,797
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,007	332	3,339
Care and Support Wales	2,071	218	2,289
Education and development programmes	2,416	533	2,949
International programmes	2,644	165	2,809
Arts and wellbeing programmes	1,060	76	1,136
Holidays and volunteering	1,397	117	1,514
Adult specialist services	627	75	702
Children's specialist services	924	96	1,020
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,579	136	<b>1,715</b>
Quality assurance and development	517	53	<b>570</b>
Other	748	-	<b>748</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>83,505</b>	<b>6,740</b>	<b>90,245</b>

### Analysis of apportioned support costs 2022/23

Activity	Facilities £000s	Management £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Governance £000s	Comms £000s	2023 £000s
Fundraising	20	16	90	73	1	57	257
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43
TouchBase	-	-	2	1	-	1	4
Care and Support Midlands	92	73	423	343	8	266	1,205
Care and Support East	84	67	386	312	7	243	1,099
Care and Support South	104	83	478	387	9	300	1,361
Care and Support North	74	59	340	276	7	214	970
Care and Support Northern Ireland	25	20	117	95	2	73	332
Care and Support Wales	17	13	77	62	1	48	218
Education programmes	41	32	187	151	4	118	533
International programmes	-	136	-	-	29	-	165
Arts and wellbeing programmes	6	5	26	21	1	16	75
Holidays and volunteering	9	7	41	33	1	26	117
Adult specialist services	6	5	26	21	1	16	75
Children's specialist services	7	6	34	27	1	21	96
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	10	8	48	39	1	30	136
Quality assurance and development	4	3	19	15	1	12	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>6,740</b>



## 5. Net gains on sale of tangible fixed assets

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	304	52

## 6. Settlement of defined benefit pension scheme

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Remeasurement of defined benefit pension scheme on cessation (30 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2022)	-	(2,633)
Administration costs defined benefit pension scheme	-	(42)
<b>Total</b>	-	(2,675)

Effective 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the deficit funding agreement in place between Sense and the LGPS regarding the defined benefit pension scheme expired as a result of a cessation valuation producing a surplus on the scheme.

The above charge of £2,633k is the accounting adjustment required to reconcile the cessation valuation surplus to the actuarial valuation surplus, which was higher.

The scheme was nil in 2023/24.

## 7. Net (decrease) / increase in funds

**The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):**

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Audit fee – Group	138	117
Audit fee – Subsidiaries	8	8
Auditors – non audit fees	9	15
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	2,703	2,958
Operating lease rentals	4,960	4,539
Interest payable on bank loans	-	236



## 8. Employee remuneration

	2024	2023
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	59,915	54,482
Social security costs	4,523	3,991
Pension costs - defined contribution schemes	2,456	2,257
Pension costs - defined benefit scheme (see note 10)	51	494
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,945</b>	<b>61,224</b>

The average monthly number of employees – excluding volunteers – was 2,851 (2023: 2,485).

Employees earning over £60,000 fell into the following bandings:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
£60,000 - £70,000	19	14
£70,000 - £80,000	7	4
£80,000 - £90,000	1	1
£90,000 - £100,000	3	1
£100,000 - £110,000	3	3
£110,000 - £120,000	1	-
£150,000 - £160,000	-	1
£160,000 - £170,000	1	-

Pension contributions for these employees were as follows:

	2024		2023	
	£000s	No.	£000s	No.
Defined contribution schemes	93	35	54	11

The aggregate remuneration of the 8 key management personnel (2023: 12) listed in the Trustees' Report, was £831,502 (2023: £745,536) before pension contributions of £29,588 (2023: £39,336).

## 9. Remuneration of members of Trustee Board

No Trustees received any remuneration during the year (2023: £nil).

One Trustee (2023: Eight) was reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and duties directly related to their duties as Trustees. Costs reimbursed were £204 (2023: £1,465).



## 10. Pensions

The Group provides defined contribution pension schemes for current employees.

In addition, the Group has ten employees who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The TPS is a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. Since the Group is unable to identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme, contributions to the TPS are accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

The Group historically participated in the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), a scheme which provides benefits based on final pensionable pay in respect of employees' past service. The Scheme was closed to new members in 2014, and the Group exited the Scheme in 2022/23. The Scheme is nil in 2023/24.

## 11. Tangible assets

Group	Freehold Property	Long leasehold improvements	Short leasehold improvements	Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Motor vehicles	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2023	27,206	4,405	4,086	22,020	3,472	61,189
Additions	773	103	1,500	3,077	143	5,596
Disposals	(250)	-	(59)	(293)	(357)	(959)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>27,729</b>	<b>4,508</b>	<b>5,527</b>	<b>24,804</b>	<b>3,258</b>	<b>65,826</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2023	4,784	933	2,274	16,483	2,787	27,261
Charge for the year	441	71	447	2,162	301	3,422
Disposals	-	-	(41)	(291)	(368)	(700)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>18,354</b>	<b>2,720</b>	<b>29,983</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>22,504</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>2,847</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>35,843</b>
At 31 March 2023	22,422	3,472	1,812	5,537	685	33,928



## 11. Tangible assets (cont'd)

Company	Freehold Property £000s	Long leasehold improvements £000s	Short leasehold improvements £000s	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s	Motor vehicles £000s	Total £000s
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2023	27,206	4,405	4,086	22,014	3,403	61,114
Additions	773	103	1,500	3,071	143	5,590
Disposals	(250)	-	(59)	(293)	(357)	(959)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>27,729</b>	<b>4,508</b>	<b>5,527</b>	<b>24,792</b>	<b>3,189</b>	<b>65,745</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2023	4,784	933	2,274	16,479	2,745	27,215
Charge for the year	441	71	447	2,159	289	3,407
Disposals	-	-	(41)	(291)	(368)	(700)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>18,347</b>	<b>2,666</b>	<b>29,922</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>22,504</b>	<b>3,504</b>	<b>2,847</b>	<b>6,445</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>35,823</b>
At 31 March 2023	22,422	3,472	1,812	5,535	658	33,899

## 12. Fixed asset investments

Company	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Holding in Helping Sense Limited	30	30

The company owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of Helping Sense Limited, which is incorporated in England and Wales, and exists to raise funds for the company. There is no readily available market value for the company and accordingly it is accounted for at cost. The Trustees believe that the carrying value of the investment is supported by the underlying net assets (note 27).



## 13. Debtors

<b>Group</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	6,286	4,687
Taxation recoverable	330	406
Other debtors	619	828
Accrued income	1,890	1,970
Prepayments	2,128	2,534
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,253</b>	<b>10,425</b>
<b>Company</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	6,286	4,687
Other debtors	588	794
Amounts owed by group undertakings	320	109
Taxation recoverable	330	406
Accrued income	1,731	1,539
Prepayments	2,113	2,525
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,368</b>	<b>10,060</b>

Trade debtors are shown net of bad and doubtful net provisions of £124k (2023: £124k)

## 14. Current asset investment

<b>Group and Company</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bank deposits	4,000	9,000

## 15. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade creditors	3,111	2,875
Taxation and social security	1,077	963
Deferred income	1,028	880
Accruals	4,103	4,207
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,319</b>	<b>8,925</b>
<b>Company</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade creditors	3,111	2,871
Taxation and social security	1,077	963
Deferred income	955	879
Accruals	4,011	4,085
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,154</b>	<b>8,798</b>



## 16. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)

Group	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Other creditors	(24)	(32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(32)</b>

## 17. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

Group and Charity	Balance 31 March 2023	Charged to Income and Expenditure	Utilised	Balance 31 March 2024
Provisions or dilapidations	962	158	(167)	953

## 18. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Group)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	39,136	89,951	92,891	3,889	40,085
Designated funds	8,500	8	325	(3,183)	5,000
Pension (note 10)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>47,636</b>	<b>89,959</b>	<b>93,216</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>45,085</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	20	-	12	-	8
Big Lottery Fund Grant	42	43	66	-	19
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	58	2	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	321	-	(321)	-
Children's Services: North	-	24	-	(20)	4
Children's Services: South East	1	82	-	(74)	9
Children's Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	(34)	-
Community Connections	105	-	-	(29)	76
Cornwall GOT Project	32	6	8	-	30
Denbigh Hub	21	10	-	-	31
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	16	-	50	50	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	82	90	49	(11)	112
GOT Group Warwickshire	26	-	1	-	25
Grafton Street Donations	46	-	2	-	44
Hadley Centre (Operations)	65	15	-	-	80
Holidays Fund	102	56	-	(158)	-
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	(12)	-	-	52
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	(8)	-	-	47
Northern Ireland Day Centre	114	-	-	(5)	109
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	29	-	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	95	149	152	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	181	16	9	-	188
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	1	-	39
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31



## 18. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Group) cont'd

Group	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	22	4	4	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	28	-	7	-	21
Sport England - Active Together	104	-	104	1	1
Stables and riding	43	16	-	-	59
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TouchBase South East	50	-	-	-	50
Virtual Buddying	-	51	-	(51)	-
Volunteering: London Transitions	34	15	-	-	49
Warren Farm Rd	202	176	-	-	378
Woodside - Capital	43	5	-	(48)	-
Woodside - Operations	60	7	-	(67)	-
Andlaw House	10	-	-	-	10
CSS Cymru Fund	150	3	-	(21)	132
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	24	1	3	-	22
The Devon Group Fund	34	2	5	-	31
Loughborough Employment Room	-	-	-	(27)	(27)
Strictly	-	24	8	-	16
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	-	155	0	-	155
Arts & Wellbeing: NLHF-National Trust Partnership	-	32	17	(15)	-
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	-	88	77	-	11
Arts & Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive Programme	-	33	47	-	(14)
Children's Services: Midlands	-	78	-	(78)	-
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	-	334	321	19	32
Early Intervention: North Wales/Denbigh Hub	-	25	-	(25)	-
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	208	3	45
Sport: Sport England System Partner	-	692	487	-	205
Woodside - Sensory Room Equipment	-	35	-	-	35
Siblings & Young Carers Programme	-	61	-	(61)	-
Other Sense	137	76	238	(80)	(105)
Active Citizens Romania	27	51	64	-	14
CareTech Foundation EI TZ 3Y 22-25	-	71	57	-	14
Hollyhock Foundation EI TZ EI 3Y 22- 25	20	27	22	-	25
Comic Relief Uganda 2020	111	67	181	-	(3)
Commonwealth Foundation Kenya	11	26	19	-	18
Guernsey Bangladesh Education	14	29	42	-	1
Romania in Country	135	59	73	-	121
KBTA - Uganda	3	23	15	-	11
Uganda iHelp Project	51	22	53	-	20
UK Aid Match Kenya 2020	85	-	56	-	29
Peru LACT ED Feb 2021-Jan 2024	46	-	47	-	(1)



## 18. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Group) cont'd

Group	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Kenya Holding Fund	-	4	101	97	-
Tanzania Holding Fund	-	-	102	102	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	107	165	59	-
Peru Holding Fund	-	-	99	99	-
Guernsey Education (Bangladesh) 2	-	23	23	-	-
Medicor (Kenya)	-	-	23	-	(23)
Deaf Child Worldwide (Kenya)	-	40	8	-	32
Nelumbo Stiftung Early Intervention (Uganda) Phase 2	-	154	54	-	100
MTN Telecoms (Uganda)	-	162	149	-	13
Lavelle (Peru)	-	33	29	-	4
FCDO Disability Inclusive Development	-	713	713	-	-
Nelumbo Stiftung Education Phase 2	-	457	195	-	262
John Lewis Foundation	-	100	-	-	100
KJCF (Peru) 2	-	64	5	-	59
Nelumbo Stiftung - Education	-	47	47	-	-
Other Sense International	9	57	39	13	40
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>5,316</b>	<b>4,257</b>	<b>(706)</b>	<b>3,126</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	351	1	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>50,760</b>	<b>95,276</b>	<b>97,473</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48,563</b>

## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Group)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	31,552	77,614	72,071	2,041	39,136
Designated funds	11,097	-	937	(1,660)	8,500
Pension deficit (note 11)	(869)	-	-	869	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>41,780</b>	<b>77,614</b>	<b>73,008</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>47,636</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	8	22	10	-	20
Arts Council: Dance at Sense	-	78	78	-	-
Big Lottery Fund Grant	47	100	105	-	42
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	51	7	-	-	58
Children's Services	-	94	-	(94)	-



## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Group) (cont'd)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Children's Services: North	-	21	-	(21)	-
Children's Services: South East	58	31	3	(85)	1
Children's Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	-	34
Community Connections	106	-	1	-	105
Cornwall GOT Project	38	15	21	-	32
Denbigh Hub	3	18	-	-	21
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	-	90	-	(90)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	-	46	-	(30)	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	15	83	15	(1)	82
GOT Group Warwickshire	28	-	2	-	26
Grafton Street Donations	36	10	-	-	46
Hadley Centre (Operations)	25	40	-	-	65
Holidays Fund	68	34	-	-	102
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Loughborough Hub Capital	200	310	25	(485)	-
Loughborough Hub Revenue	50	(50)	-	-	-
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	7	-	-	114
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	25	4	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	96	143	144	-	95
Northern Ireland Outreach Worker	20	-	-	(20)	-
Northern Ireland Special Donations	165	32	16	-	181
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	-	-	40
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	-	195	212	17	-
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	16	6	-	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	30	1	3	-	28
Northern Ireland Specialist Services	31	-	-	(31)	-
Sport England - Active Together	-	537	403	(30)	104
Stables and riding	9	34	-	-	43
TBP CSS Studio Development	29	54	-	(82)	1
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	(26)	-
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TouchBase South East	30	20	-	-	50
Virtual Buddying	-	137	149	12	-



## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Group) (cont'd)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Volunteering: London Transitions	-	35	1	-	34
Warren Farm Rd	2	200	-	-	202
Woodside - Capital	43	-	-	-	43
Woodside - Operations	64	3	7	-	60
Andlaw House	10	-	-	-	10
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	50	-	50	-	-
CSS Cymru Fund	26	157	3	(30)	150
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
The Devon Group Fund	33	4	-	-	34
Other	521	29	287	(126)	137
Active Citizens Romania	-	64	37	-	27
NLCF Tanzania Adults vocational 2019-2022	38	-	38	-	-
CareTech Foundation EI TZ 3Y 22- 25	-	34	34	-	-
Hollyhock Foundation EI TZ EI 3Y 22- 25	-	41	21	-	20
Comic Relief Uganda 2020	81	135	105	-	111
Commonwealth Foundation Kenya	-	30	19	-	11
UK Aid Match Bangladesh	63	-	63	-	-
FCDO UK Aid Match Kenya (Early Intervention)	-	129	129	-	-
UK Aid Direct Kenya Co-Funding	9	25	32	-	2
FCDO Disability in Development Bangladesh Livelihoods	(1)	51	50	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Kenya Innovation Education	(2)	34	32	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Kenya	-	93	92	-	1
FCDO Disability in Development Tanzania	(2)	210	208	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Nepal	-	94	93	-	1
FCDO Disability in Development Bangladesh Education	-	114	114	-	-
Guernsey Bangladesh Education	-	23	9	-	14
Jersey Overseas Aid Nepal	37	33	70	-	-
The Batchworth Trust (Nepal)	24	-	24	-	-
Romania In Country	138	28	31	-	135



## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Group) (cont'd)

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
KBTA - Uganda	-	23	20	-	3
Lavelle	34	-	34	-	-
UN Women (Uganda)	7	33	40	-	-
Uganda iHelp Project	4	107	60	-	51
Nepal Base Fund	-	30	30	-	-
UK Aid Match- Bangladesh	43	(48)	6	-	1
Nelumbo Foundation - Education	224	173	398	-	(1)
Thomas Cook Children's Charity (South Goa)	31	-	22	-	9
UK Aid Match Kenya 2020	87	81	83	-	85
Uganda Nelumbo Foundation project	30	-	30	-	-
Peru LACT ED Feb 2021-Jan 2024	28	49	31	-	46
Directors Week	-	31	31	-	-
Kenya Holding Fund	-	77	77	-	-
Tanzania Holding Fund	1	114	115	-	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	208	208	-	-
Bangladesh Holding Fund	-	29	29	-	-
Peru Holding Fund	-	35	35	-	-
Other	37	51	93	-	(5)
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>4,784</b>	<b>4,046</b>	<b>(1,250)</b>	<b>2,773</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	360	-	(9)	-	351
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>45,425</b>	<b>82,398</b>	<b>77,063</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,760</b>



## 18. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Company)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	38,618	90,030	93,149	4,256	39,755
Designated funds	8,500	7	325	(3,182)	5,000
Pension (note 10)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>47,118</b>	<b>90,037</b>	<b>93,474</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>44,755</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	20	-	12	-	8
Big Lottery Fund Grant	42	43	66	-	19
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	58	2	-	-	60
Children's Services	-	321	-	(321)	-
Children's Services: North	-	24	-	(20)	4
Children's Services: South East	1	82	0	(74)	9
Children's Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	(34)	-
Community Connections	105	-	-	(29)	76
Cornwall GOT Project	32	6	8	-	30
Denbigh Hub	21	10	-	-	31
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	16	-	50	50	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	82	90	49	(11)	112
GOT Group Warwickshire	26	-	1	-	25
Grafton Street Donations	46	-	2	-	44
Hadley Centre (Operations)	65	15	-	-	80
Holidays Fund	102	56	-	(158)	-
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	(12)	-	-	52
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	(8)	-	-	47
Northern Ireland Day Centre	114	-	-	(5)	109
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	29	-	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	95	149	152	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	181	16	9	-	188
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	1	-	39
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	22	4	4	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	28	-	7	-	21
Sport England - Active Together	104	-	104	1	1



## 18. Movement of funds 2023-24 (Company) (cont'd)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
Stables and riding	43	16	-	-	59
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TBSE, Hyde Close, Barnet	50	10	3	-	57
Virtual Buddying	-	51	-	(51)	-
Volunteering: London Transitions	34	15	-	-	49
Warren Farm Rd	202	176	-	-	378
Woodside - Capital	43	5	-	(48)	-
Woodside - Operations	60	7	-	(67)	-
CSS Cymru Fund	150	3	-	(21)	132
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	35	1	3	-	33
The Devon Group Fund	34	2	5	-	31
Loughborough Employment Room	-	-	-	(27)	(27)
Strictly	-	24	8	-	16
Belfast Hub Capital Fund	-	155	-	-	155
Arts & Wellbeing: NLHF-National Trust	-	32	17	(15)	-
Arts & Wellbeing: Esmee Fairbairn (ASW Salaries)	-	88	77	-	11
Arts & Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive Programme	-	33	47	-	(14)
Children's Services: Midlands	-	78	-	(78)	-
Early Intervention: Reaching Communities	-	334	321	19	32
Early Intervention: North Wales/Denbigh Hub	-	25	-	(25)	-
Arts & Wellbeing: Arts Council (NPO)	-	250	253	3	-
Sport: Sport England System Partner	-	592	537	-	55
Woodside - Sensory Room Equipment	-	35	-	-	35
Other	552	286	182	(140)	516
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,677</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>1,918</b>	<b>(1,074)</b>	<b>2,724</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	351	1	-	-	352
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>50,146</b>	<b>93,077</b>	<b>95,392</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>47,831</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £20,000. 'Other funds'; are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £20,000.



## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Company)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	31,183	76,630	71,236	2,041	38,618
Designated funds	11,097	-	937	(1,660)	8,500
Pension deficit (note 11)	(869)	-	-	869	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>41,411</b>	<b>76,630</b>	<b>72,173</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>47,118</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	8	22	10	-	20
Arts Council: Dance at Sense	-	78	78	-	-
Big Lottery Fund Grant	47	100	105	-	42
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	51	7	-	-	58
Children's Services	-	94	-	(94)	-
Children's Services: North	-	21	-	(21)	-
Children's Services: South East	58	31	3	(85)	1
Children's Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	-	34
Community Connections	106	-	1	-	105
Cornwall GOT Project	38	15	21	-	32
Denbigh Hub	3	18	-	-	21
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	-	90	-	(90)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	-	46	-	(30)	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	15	83	15	(1)	82
GOT Group Warwickshire	28	-	2	-	26
Grafton Street Donations	36	10	-	-	46
Hadley Centre (Operations)	25	40	-	-	65
Holidays Fund	68	34	-	-	102
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Loughborough Hub Capital	200	310	25	(485)	-
Loughborough Hub Revenue	50	(50)	-	-	-
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	7	-	-	114
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	25	4	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out of Schools Club	96	143	144	-	95
Northern Ireland Outreach Worker	20	-	-	(20)	-
Northern Ireland Special Donations	165	32	16	-	181



## 18. Movement of funds 2022-23 (Company) (cont'd)

Company	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000s	Income £000s	Expenditure £000s	Transfers £000s	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000s
<b>Restricted funds cont'd</b>					
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	-	-	40
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	-	195	212	17	-
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	16	6	-	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	30	1	3	-	28
Northern Ireland Specialist Services	31	-	-	(31)	-
Sport England - Active Together	-	537	403	(30)	104
Stables and riding	9	34	-	-	43
TBP CSS Studio Development	29	54	-	(82)	1
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	(26)	-
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TBSE, Hyde Close, Barnet	30	20	-	-	50
Virtual Buddying	-	137	149	12	-
Volunteering: London Transitions	-	35	1	-	34
Warren Farm Rd	2	200	-	-	202
Woodside - Capital	43	-	-	-	43
Woodside - Operations	64	3	7	-	60
Andlaw House	10	-	-	-	10
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	50	-	50	-	-
CSS Cymru Fund	26	157	3	(30)	150
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
The Devon Group Fund	33	4	-	-	34
Other	518	346	186	(126)	552
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>2,993</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>(1,250)</b>	<b>2,677</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	360	-	(9)	-	351
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>44,142</b>	<b>79,623</b>	<b>73,619</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,146</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £20k. 'Other funds'; are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £20k.



## 18. Movement of funds (cont'd)

### Unrestricted funds

#### General fund

This represents the accumulated reserves of the charity that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees.

#### Designated funds

Designated funds are £5.0m (2023: £8.5 million) and include £2.0 million for the maintenance and improvement of the Group's residential accommodation and £0.3 million for three years of contributions to Sense International.

Various future strategic plans will be funded from reserves. Trustees have therefore designated £2.7 million for the following projects:

- £0.5 million for investment in energy efficiency improvements centred on our buildings,
- £1.0 million for digital development
- £1.2 million to further progress the Hubs development programme.

#### Pensions

See note 10 for the movement during the year. The Scheme is nil in the year.

### Restricted funds

Sense is reliant on the support of individuals, corporations, trusts, other charities and state bodies in order to deliver our activities. Monies that are received for an express purpose are restricted to that purpose.

The principal restricted funds are considered to be:

#### Sport England

A three-year project to build on our foundations of supporting people with complex disabilities to get active.



## 18. Movement of funds (cont'd)

### **Children's services**

Money donated to support Children & Young People who are Deafblind/multi-sensory impaired.

### **Northern Ireland day centre**

Commissioned day service opportunities for adults with complex needs.

### **Northern Ireland special donations**

An accumulation of donations / fundraised funds raised locally for services in Northern Ireland.

### **Holidays**

Donations and fundraised income to support accessible holidays for people with complex disabilities.

### **Warren Farm Road**

A legacy donation restricted to be used against costs at the Warren Farm Road Care Home.

### **Comic Relief Uganda**

This fund comprises the unspent balance at 31 March 2023 of a grant from Comic Relief to Sense International Uganda for the Holistic Early Child Development (ECD) for Children with Complex Disabilities in Uganda project.

### **The Romania in-country income fund**

This fund comprises funds that are raised by Sense International Romania for use in Romania.

### **Endowment funds**

These are properties given to the charity for its use. The movement on the fund represents the depreciation charge in the year.

### **Transfers between funds**

Other transfers between funds represent either transfers from unrestricted funds to cover shortfalls of restricted funds or transfers from restricted funds to cover related expenditure paid by unrestricted monies.



## 19. Analysis of net assets between fund balances 2023-24

Group 2024	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Designated Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total Funds £000s
Tangible Fixed Asset	35,491	-	-	352	35,843
Net current assets	3,980	5,000	3,568	-	12,548
Long-term liabilities	(24)	-	-	-	(24)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,447</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>3,568</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>48,367</b>

Company 2024	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	35,471	-	-	352	35,823
Fixed asset Investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	4,057	5,000	2,724	-	11,781
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,558</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>47,634</b>

## 19. Analysis of net assets between fund balances 2022-23

Group 2023	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	33,577	-	-	351	33,928
Net current assets	5,591	8,500	2,773	-	16,864
Long-term liabilities	(32)	-	-	-	(32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,136</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>50,760</b>

Company 2023	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	33,548	-	-	351	33,899
Fixed asset investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	5,040	8,500	2,677	-	16,217
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,618</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>2,677</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>50,146</b>

## 20. Capital commitments

At 31 March 2024 the Group had capital commitments of £555k (2023: £45k).

## 21. Contingent liabilities

Sense, Sense International and Helping Sense Limited are members of a group VAT registration. Under the Value Added Tax Act 1983, all members of a VAT group are jointly and severally liable for any tax due during the period of their membership.



As disclosed in note 27 two of the Company's subsidiaries, Helping Sense Limited and Sense4Enterprise Limited, have taken advantage of the exemption available under Section 479 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the requirement for audit. As a condition of the exemption, the Company has guaranteed the year-end liabilities of the relevant subsidiaries until they are settled in full. The liabilities of one of the subsidiaries (Sense4Enterprise Limited) at the year-end were £134,814 (2023: £126,736). The Trustees are satisfied that this does not impact on the going concern position of the Group and believe that this is an accurate and robust guarantee. The other subsidiary (Helping Sense Limited) had assets of £30,000 (2023: £30,000) at 31 March 2024.

## 22. Operating lease commitments

Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

Group and Company	2024 Land and buildings £000s	2023 Land and buildings £000s
Operating leases which expire:		
Within one year	3,985	4,378
In two to five years	13,055	12,640
After five years	10,907	9,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,947</b>	<b>26,906</b>



## 23. Reconciliation of net Income/(expenditure) to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
Net income before pension revaluations	(2,193)	(3,715)
Defined benefit pension scheme deficit reduction payments	-	(452)
Interest received	(471)	(299)
Interest paid	-	236
Gain on interest rate swap closed	-	(233)
Depreciation Charges	3,421	2,958
Profit on sale of fixed assets	(305)	(201)
(Increase)/ decrease in stock	30	(246)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(828)	(1,607)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	385	165
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>(3,394)</b>

## 24. Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash

	2024 £000s	2023 £000s
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year	(4,523)	(5,041)
Bank loan interest repayments	-	319
Repayment of bank loan	-	5,333
<b>Changes generated from cash flows</b>	<b>(4,523)</b>	<b>611</b>
Net cash at start of year (including short term deposits)	14,667	14,056
<b>Net cash at end of year</b>	<b>10,144</b>	<b>14,667</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net debt 2023-24

	At 1 April 2023 £000s	Cash flows £000s	Non-cash changes £000s	At 31 March 2024 £000s
Cash at bank and in hand	5,667	477	-	6,144
Current asset investments	9,000	(5,000)	-	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,667</b>	<b>(4,523)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,144</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net debt 2022-23

	At 1 April 2022 £000s	Cash flows £000s	Non-cash changes £000s	At 31 March 2023 £000s
Cash at bank and in hand	15,708	(10,041)	-	5,667
Current asset investments	4,000	5,000	-	9,000
Debt due within one year	(319)	319	-	-
Debt due after one year	(5,333)	5,333	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,056</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,667</b>



## 26. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	6,144	5,667
Current asset investments	4,000	9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,144</b>	<b>14,667</b>

Current asset investments are fixed term deposits for a term of one year or less.

## 27. Related party transactions

The Group provides services to children or family members of some Trustees and Board members of the charity. These services are provided as part of the contracts agreed with funding authorities on the same commercial terms as with any other service user. These transactions happen at arms length.

Balances with subsidiaries are disclosed below:

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	Debtor/(Creditor)	Debtor/(Creditor)
	£	£
Sense International	215,491	199,816
Helping Sense Limited	(30,000)	(30,000)
Sense4Enterprise Limited	134,813	126,736

## 28. Subsidiary companies

### Sense International

	2024	2023
	£000s	£000s
Income	3,135	2,347
Expenditure	(2,817)	(3,009)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>(662)</b>
Assets	1,271	883
Liabilities	(404)	(328)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>555</b>



## 28. Subsidiary companies (cont'd)

### Helping Sense Limited

	<b>2024</b>	2023
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Turnover	5,436	4,966
Cost of sales	(838)	(863)
Gross profit	4,598	4,103
Operating expenses	(4,598)	(4,103)
<b>Net profit</b>	-	-
Assets	30	30
<b>Net assets</b>	30	30

### Sense4Enterprise Limited

	<b>2024</b>	2023
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Income	314	84
Expenditure	(322)	(89)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	(8)	(5)
Liabilities	(134)	(126)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	(134)	(126)

**SENSE, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 289868

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# Accounts

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## **Sense Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023**

### **Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association:**

Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (Sense), Sense International and Helping Sense Limited

Sense: Registered number 1825301

Registered charity number: 289868



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## Message from our President

We know everyone is feeling the strain that increases to the cost of living have continued to bring over the last year. But we've also seen clearly that the crisis is not affecting everyone equally.

Disabled people and their families are affected more than most people by the cost of living. Last year, I was fortunate to spend time with several families so I could learn firsthand about what they're facing. Many are spending most of their income on food and energy, where prices have been spiralling fastest. And the extra costs associated with disability, such as higher energy use to power equipment, is hitting people hard.

Given the limitations of government-led assistance and under-funding of social care services, Sense considered carefully what response charities should take. As President, I'm proud that we launched an emergency fund for the families most affected. This is just one of the ways that Sense has been a vital lifeline to many families during this time, and we will continue to lead the way in the national response.

We know from Sense research that 1.6 million people in the United Kingdom have a complex disability. And that number is growing. Estimates are there will be 2 million people by 2029. With one in ten disabled people having a complex disability, we now need to move towards a systematic approach to transform social care. People with complex disabilities need and deserve stronger funding than they currently receive, and Sense will continue to fight for this long overdue change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'The Lord Levy'.

The Lord Levy  
President



## Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

We continue to live in extraordinarily challenging times. Covid-19 exposed deep poverty and fault lines within our welfare system. Now, a continuing crisis with the spiralling cost of living threatens the security of society's poorest and most excluded communities. In particular, disabled children, adults, and families are feeling the effects more than almost anyone else.

Sense argued that the Government can and should do more to help disabled households weather price shocks in energy and the cost of living. Frontline staff spoke about desperate stories of disabled households living in just one room to keep warm, and families sitting in the dark eating one meal a day. We know that disabled people have to use energy for essential equipment like charging a wheelchair or running oxygen machines, feeding pumps or nebulisers, and many didn't know where to turn.

In a first for Sense, we responded by launching an emergency fund to help plug some of the gaps. Working with Turn2us, we allocated unrestricted grants of £500 to help 1,000 disabled households on low incomes. We followed this up with further grants of £200, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. We also allocated a proportion of the fund to seven other charities supporting people with complex needs, including Batten Disease Association, Rett UK, and Well Child.

This direct financial support made a crucial difference to families in a period of dire need, but this cannot be an excuse for government not to fulfil its duties. We continue to argue strongly for more targeted support for disabled people and greater investment in social care, and we've empowered people with first-hand experience to influence debate, drive change and shape policy discussions on these issues.

Like the people we support, Sense, along with so many charities, has also been impacted by high inflation. Our operating costs are increasing, while our income streams face new strains, including the frailty of social care funding. At the same time, the demand and need for our services is increasing more than ever, and there are challenges with recruitment and retention of both social care and retail staff. As the crisis continues, we foresee that



these pressures will only deepen and we will face difficult decisions about what we are able to achieve in the next financial year.

During this unprecedented time of uncertainty and change, we could not be more grateful for the hard work and dedication of our team of Sense employees and volunteers. We also realise that they too are impacted by the crisis and it is essential to provide the right support for our people. We have developed a wellbeing action plan, put in place an information hub to improve knowledge of mental health, and provided the Headspace app for every member of staff. As we enter a new year, we will be striving to look after the wellbeing of our staff with the same urgency and focus that we give to the people we support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Molloy'.

Justin Molloy  
Chair, Sense

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Kramer'.

Richard Kramer  
Chief Executive, Sense and Sense International



# Report of the Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association

## Who we are: our mission and vision

### Who we are

Sense is a national disability charity that supports children and adults who are deafblind or have complex disabilities to communicate, experience the world, and fulfil their potential. We also have an international arm, Sense International, which works in eight countries round the world.

Sense offers personalised support in our residential and supported living services; in the community and across our centres, holidays and short breaks; and provides opportunities for children and adults to take part in arts and sport activities across the country.

We are here for everyone who needs us, for as long as they need us, providing early intervention for children, helping young people access education across Sense Colleges, and supporting the transition into adulthood and beyond. As well as providing practical support, we also offer information to families, and we campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

We work with a range of partners to deliver our services, including local authorities, housing associations, healthcare professionals, schools, and art and sport organisations.

Some of our services are funded by Local Authorities and integrated care systems (ICSs), whilst others, such as our specialist work with children and young people, are entirely dependent on charitable fundraising and income from our trading through more than 100 Sense shops.

All of our different services are tailored to the needs of each individual person.

### Our mission

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication, so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.



## **What we believe**

Our vision is of a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

## **What we do**

We provide expert support that's tailored to the individual needs of each person who has complex disabilities or is deafblind. That might be through our centres, holidays and short breaks, or in people's homes. In addition to practical support, we also offer information to families, and campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities and those who are deafblind to take part in life.

## **Who we support**

We are here for every person living with complex disabilities that make it a challenge to communicate, access information and take part in life.

We are specialists in providing the individual, tailored support people need to lead a fulfilling life.

## **What we mean by complex disabilities and deafblindness**

People with complex disabilities – or complex needs – have two or more disabilities and experience unique barriers in daily life. This can make it harder to develop new skills, communicate and live independently.

Deafblindness is a disability in its own right. It means you have sight and hearing impairment that affects your everyday life. Access to information, communicating with people and getting about on your own can be much more difficult.

Being deafblind doesn't necessarily mean you are totally deaf and/or totally blind. Most people who are deafblind have some sight and some hearing.

## **How we support**

We know that, with the right support, it is possible for every person to make sense of their world and the world around them, no matter how complex their disabilities.



We help people to communicate and express themselves – be it through speech or sign, touch or movement, gesture or sound, art or dance.

For over 65 years, Sense has developed an unrivalled depth of knowledge, skill and expertise to help people overcome the barriers to communication. We help people to develop the skills to enjoy everyday things like having a conversation, enjoying friendships and living independently.

We offer personalised and flexible services that are built around the specific needs of each person. That means we support people in their home and in the community, in their education and transition to adulthood, and through our holidays, arts, sports and wellbeing programmes.

We also offer practical support to families, including information, advice, short breaks and family events.

We campaign to change laws and government policies where necessary, to ensure that everyone, no matter how complex their disabilities, can communicate, access information, and take part in life.

## Our year in numbers

### Our reach in numbers

Last year, our many different services reached more than **30,000** people and families – 2,000 more than last year. We've expanded services to support new people in new locations, while also continuing our long-term support.

Our cost of living campaign encouraged more than **80,000** people to sign our online petition, backing our call for the government to provide greater financial support to disabled households. The government responded by increasing benefits in line with inflation, but our campaign for more targeted support for disabled people continues.

We raised **£12,875,000** in donations and legacies for our work across Sense and Sense International, thanks to the generosity of our supporters.



We almost **doubled** our social media followers, and engagement with our posts was up **90%**, by focusing our stories on the people we support.

## Our service in numbers

Because of the scale and severity of the rising cost of living, we launched our first large-scale financial support scheme for families living with a loved one with complex disabilities. Two rounds of emergency funding grants distributed **£700,000** to families to help support them with extra costs.

Our Connect services, designed to tackle loneliness and social isolation, reached over **3,400** people and families with dedicated support for siblings and young carers of children with complex disabilities. We helped people connect with peers and volunteer buddies through a range of one-to-one, face-to-face, group and virtual sessions.

We supported over **3,800** children and families through our specialist and operational services. This was 300 more than last year.

Our information and advice line supported people with **5,041** enquiries. This was a similar number to last year, when we saw large increases in the use of this service compared to previous years.

**5,388** people and families benefitted from our sports and physical activity programme, which aims for every person with a complex disability to lead a more active life.

**4,580** people and families were supported in our inclusive art and wellbeing activities. This was over 2.5 times as many as last year.

In partnership with local and education authorities, we supported **351** people in our accommodation services – up 30% since last year – and **700** people accessed either a day opportunity, individual support or both through our 10 Sense Centres. Our specialist college sites worked with **334** young people and adults.

Our services have continued to maintain the same high standards as last year, with **94%** judged by the Care Quality Commission to be good or outstanding.



## Our influence in numbers

We held **17** meetings with MPs, half of these with members of the cabinet or shadow cabinet. We also arranged a meeting between a storyteller and their MP to talk about the impact the rising cost of living is having on people with complex disabilities.

**21** MPs and peers came to our events in Parliament that focused on the cost of living.

Sense and our campaigns were mentioned in Parliament **77** times, nearly four times the 21 mentions last year.

We submitted evidence to **22** inquiries and consultations on a range of topics, including the Covid inquiry, developing Labour policy for their manifesto and the SEND review.

There were **1,050** items of press coverage highlighting the Sense cause and allowing disabled people and their families to be heard. This was a 16% increase from last year.

## Our strategic outcomes: plans and achievements.

Imagine a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out of life. Our strategy – No One Left Out of Life – targets four strategic outcomes. These were refreshed for 2021-26 and outline our ambition to support ten times more people living with complex disabilities by 2026. That's 50,000 people over five years.

Here are some of the achievements and plans that further our mission and take us towards delivering on that goal:

### Outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start

Being a parent or carer of a child who is deafblind or with complex disabilities can be challenging. But, the right support, at the right time, can make all the difference in a child's development.

#### Key achievements

Across all our charitable programmes, Sense reached 6,071 new children and their families this year.



We launched our **Early Intervention and Play service** in Birmingham, Loughborough and North Wales, offering Connect and Play sessions that reached 607 children with complex disabilities aged 0-8 years and their families. These services support the vital contribution that free play makes to a child's development. With everything from sensory stories to outdoors forest school, we helped children find new ways to connect, communicate and play with their parents and carers, and with other children.

The pilot period provided excellent feedback from families. 83% of parents (24) agreed with the statement "I feel more positive about my family's future" after attending the weekly sessions, and 100% of parents attending the weekly sessions (24) would "recommend Sense's service to other parents and carers of children aged 0-8 with complex needs."

We secured funding of £1.3 million from Reaching Communities to continue to offer and expand the service, including developing a toy and tech resource loan service for the next three years.

Our **Multi-sensory impaired (MSI) children's team** of teachers and practitioners continues to provide tailored extra support for children and young people aged 0-25 nationally. This includes specialist one-to-one support at home or in nursery/school, early years groups, family events, parent/carer information and wellbeing sessions, and bespoke training. The team reached 3,276 children and families through both face-to-face and virtual activities that help children and families communicate with each other, access education, and more.

The MSI team also led and attended professional events across the country to raise awareness and share knowledge of deafblindness and MSI, reaching over 850 professionals.

## **Plans for 2023-24**

During the coming year, we plan to expand our work supporting children and families to get the best possible start. We'll have a particular focus on offering both digital and face-to-face services, so that more people can access our support in the way that suits them best:



- We will develop our Digital Toolkits to help more families than ever to access information, services and products for children with complex disabilities and their families.
- We will test and launch our Toys and Tech National Library, supporting families to access technology to help their child learn and communicate.
- We will expand our services to reach more children and families across England and Northern Ireland, rolling out more support in Bristol, Belfast and London.
- We will hold a conference for families to access more information and support from Sense in the future.
- We will develop a new holiday offer for children and their families to allow more families to benefit from an unforgettable accessible holiday.

## Outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives

We believe that everyone has a right to live a fulfilling life and play an active part in their community, including through equal access to work, education and training.

With the right support, that reflects people's aspirations and needs, we can ensure that no one is left out, or unable to fulfil their potential.

### Key achievements

**Sense College** continued to grow across 9 sites, with students following a person-centred curriculum for up to 4 years.

We successfully completed redevelopment of our college in Loughborough, and Sense Hub Loughborough opened on time and on budget in January 2023. This has given students new opportunities through arts, sports and employment. The initial timetable at the Hub includes 45 sessions per week of learning and activities for children and adults.

We identified a new **supported living** site in Belfast for 6 people who will be new to Sense. The service is due to open in Autumn 2023.

Despite slower demand for new services due to a backlog of adult social care assessments, we worked with commissioners of services – for example Local Authorities



and integrated care systems (ICSs) – to extend our commissioned support. We exceeded our target to reach 80 new adults across commissioned services, with 142 new adults benefiting from our support. These included support across our supported living, college, residential care and day services.

## Plans for 2023-24

During the coming year, we plan to deliver on our objectives to support adults to live and learn at every stage of their lives:

- We will continue to develop our hubs programme across the UK. Our two new hubs in Denbigh and Belfast will be opened, offering a range of vital services and support in these areas.
- We will increase the numbers of adults accessing our services.

## Outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected in their communities

Almost two thirds of the 16 million disabled people living in the UK are chronically lonely. We're supporting people to find a route out of loneliness by helping them build confidence, access new environments, and make connections within their local community. We aim to generate new social connections for more than 30,000 people over five years.

## Key achievements

Last year Sense supported 12,511 people and families through a range of activities to help people combat loneliness, learn new skills and make connections.

**Sense Holidays** were back to pre-pandemic numbers with unique, unforgettable breaks that help people have new experiences and make friends for life. We hosted 18 holidays for 85 people with complex disabilities, including a Deafblind International holiday. The service also received an outstanding Ofsted report this year.

Our face-to-face **Sense Buddying** continued matching young people with like-minded volunteer buddies in East London and we started a new group in Manchester. Our **Virtual Buddying** programme made a difference to even more people. It reached 315 buddies



with a range of activities, including a meet up in Regent's Park where some of our virtual buddies met in person for the first time.

We supported 495 **siblings and young carers** through our services, with sessions ranging from book clubs to online gaming and makeup tutorials. Siblings were supported to develop peer-to-peer friendships with a fellow sibling, and we ran our first weekend residential.

**Our Sense Arts** programme opened up high quality arts and cultural activities to 1,910 people with complex disabilities, empowering people to use their creativity to express themselves and connect with the world around them. An additional 3,256 people also engaged with our public specialist arts events and workshops, allowing many more people to find out about our work.

We delivered over 500 dance workshops as part of our new disabled-led National Dance Programme. The programme reached 7 locations across the country and employed 20 new freelance dancers. We won the Digital Inclusion award from Arts Council England for our dance film Moving Portraits.

Our **Sense Active** programme supported 2,245 people with complex disabilities to access sport and physical activity. We also trained 1,109 sports professionals, carers and paid supporters to develop their skills in inclusive sports practice and sensory approaches.

Our **employment programme** supported 237 disabled people and 1,070 employers, including providing access to training, volunteering and work preparation.

## **Plans for 2023-24**

During the coming year, we plan to continue improving our digital services to increase the number of people able to access support that helps ensure they are less lonely and more connected in their communities:

- We will continue to increase the number of people we reach through our virtual buddying and siblings programmes.
- With £750,000 investment secured through being awarded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status from the Arts Council last year, we will roll out our arts



programme, and support more people with complex disabilities to access arts and culture.

- With £2.2m from Sport England to act as a System Partner and deliver a 4-year 'Active Lifestyles' programme, we will expand Sense Active to the North-West of England. We'll also roll out a national workforce development programme to ensure more disabled people are better included in local sports facilities.
- We are developing a new employment programme. We will expand our face-to-face support to Sense Hub Loughborough and continue offering virtual support.

## Outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action

For over 65 years, Sense has been standing up for disability rights. We support disabled people and their families to fight for change on a local and national level.

### Key achievements

In 2022 we published groundbreaking research on the **scale of complex disabilities** across the UK. For the first time, we now know how many people with complex disabilities there are and how this will change in the future. This research has helped us to highlight the scale of the inequalities and barriers people face. We've used the findings in our work with politicians, our fundraising, in the press and more.

We fought hard throughout last year for recognition of the way the **crisis in the cost of living** has disproportionately affected people with complex disabilities. Our cost of living campaign raised awareness amongst the general public, funders, politicians and more. An individual giving fundraising appeal raised money for vital support for families struggling financially, including an emergency fund for those most in need.

We also published research that showed how much disabled people were struggling financially, even before the crisis. We campaigned strongly for government to offer better financial support to disabled people, and to increase benefits in line with inflation. Through our campaigning on the cost of living and more, we significantly raised awareness of Sense and our work amongst **politicians**. For the first time, we attended party



conferences, and spoke to 50 MPs and peers, as well as local councillors, parliamentary staff and others with influence in government.

We relaunched our **website**, putting all the different services we offer in one place for the first time. 452,000 people visited the website – up 23% on the previous year. We revamped our information and advice to be more accessible and inclusive, and made sure disabled people were involved in its testing and development. We added new or updated information about a whole range of subjects relating to deafblindness and complex disabilities. As the spiralling cost of living worsened, we included new advice about managing increased costs and benefits available. There is also detailed information about our services for social workers and local authorities, and dedicated resources for education and sports professionals.

We also launched an online store, a new petition and campaigning platform, an activity finder tool and a new holiday booking process. Revenue through the website rose 36%.

Our **social media** channels significantly grew awareness of Sense over the last year. By focusing our stories on the people we support, we almost doubled our followers, and engagement with our posts was up 90%. As an example, the Sense Awards had just under 6,000 engagements on social media in 2021. In 2022, this grew to 27,000.

Opening Sense shops in new areas has helped our reach and engagement, including for our petition on the cost of living. Our shops' Facebook pages have 21,000 direct followers, connected further to many community groups.

## **Plans for 2023-24**

During the coming year, we plan to expand our supporter base to ensure society is aware of our work and is inspired to take action:

- We will develop and launch our new campaigning and influencing strategy to consolidate our approach to how we target our campaigns and influence stakeholders.
- We aim to reach new audiences to grow the number of people actively supporting our work, allowing us to expand our support even further.



- We will review our brand recognition metric and increase the percentage of people that recognise our brand to further spread understanding of our work.
- We'll expand the number of Sense retail stores in England and Wales, to help generate more income to fund our work, promote our brand and increase awareness of our campaigns amongst the general public.

## **Sense International: performance against objectives for 2022/23**

Sense International supports children and adults with deafblindness in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. People with deafblindness in the countries we work in are more likely to live in poverty and be unemployed, with lower educational outcomes than other disabled people. They face multiple barriers, including lack of access to healthcare, education, vocational training and opportunities to participate in their community. Lack of accessible information and communication makes it extremely difficult for them to voice their issues.

Sense International had three strategic objectives for 2022/23:

- Innovate: People with deafblindness are included in national systems.
- Inform: People with deafblindness, and the people who support them, have more information, skills and knowledge.
- Influence: People with deafblindness are recognised in laws, policies and budgets.

Here are some examples of the ways we worked towards those objectives in 2022-23, including support we delivered as part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-funded Disability-Inclusive Development programme:

### **Strategic objective 1: People with deafblindness are included in national systems**

We innovate and show how people with deafblindness can be included in national systems such as healthcare, education and vocational training, working in partnership with governments, partner organisations, parents and others.



## Screening and early intervention

The sooner we identify and support a child with deafblindness, the more likely they are to develop to their full potential. Through our work, we demonstrate to governments, health authorities, families and communities how early screening can be used, and the huge difference that early support and therapy can make. We train health workers and enable parents to understand and communicate with their child, to boost children's progress towards achieving developmental milestones.

This year, 60,847 children were screened for deafblindness across our countries.

**In Kenya**, we screened 48,532 children, thanks to an additional 30 community health volunteers being assigned to screening. Specialised software and tablet-based technology was used to conduct screening and upload data to a central database, which allowed Sense International Kenya to instantly track progress.

**In Peru**, we supported the establishment of three sensory stimulation rooms in schools in the regions of Ica, Apurimac and Tumbes to provide therapy support to students.

## Inclusive education

We work with families, schools, colleges, partner organisations, government institutions and ministries of education, to enable learners with deafblindness to get the educational support they need and fulfil their potential.

Across all countries, we supported 7,939 children with deafblindness to access education.

**In Uganda**, we continued to provide learning support assistance to 55 children (25 girls and 30 boys) in schools. 50 children progressed to the next grades.

**In India**, 3,104 children were supported with access to education, with 407 in schools, and others supported through centres or at home.

**In Bangladesh**, we supported 157 children (88 boys and 69 girls) with access to education in their homes. Out of these, 30 boys and 27 girls have transitioned to schools so far.



## Vocational training and livelihoods

Like any young person, young people with deafblindness want to be as independent as possible, earn a living and contribute to their families and communities. We support young people with deafblindness through the different stages of this process, enabling them to join a vocational training centre, become an apprentice, or plan to start their own business.

1,205 young people were supported with vocational training or opportunities to earn across our eight countries.

**In Bangladesh**, we adapted an apprenticeship model originally developed for people without disabilities, to enable people with deafblindness to receive training from a master craft person in their community in trades such as sewing, carpentry, computers and batik. Out of the 15 trainees, 12 are now employed and earning an income.

**In Kenya**, 18 micro entrepreneurs reported doubling or tripling their profit margins, after receiving intensive business training, business growth kits and support linking to supply chains.

### Strategic objective 2: People with deafblindness, and the people who support them, have more information, skills and knowledge

We share information and train people with deafblindness, their families and carers, health-workers, educators and other professionals, communities and decision-makers, so that people with deafblindness get better support.

Across all countries, 8,774 people were trained to support people with deafblindness.

Funded by Nelumbo Foundation, we continue to develop the online Global Deafblindness Resource Centre – [deafblindness.info](https://deafblindness.info) – with accessible information and resources for those who support people with deafblindness, including parents, caregivers, teachers and NGO workers. We currently have resources in three languages on the hub – English, Romanian and Spanish – and will soon have resources in more languages, including Bangla, Hindi, Nepali and Swahili.



**In Kenya**, eight physical resource hubs were also established in schools and hospitals, all equipped with tablets. The tablets have programmes and resources installed, providing information on disability and deafblindness, which was accessed by 1,898 learners and 753 teachers. Additionally, the first class of 63 learning support assistants (LSAs) completed their practical training and graduated from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. 80% of the LSAs trained in Kenya are still being supported by the local school boards, demonstrating the value and sustainability of the approach, and we continue to advocate for the Ministry of Education to officially embed LSAs in schools.

**In Peru**, 117 education professionals from Ica, Tacna and Tumbes were trained to support students with deafblindness and received a final certification for 200 academic hours.

### Strategic objective 3: People with deafblindness are recognised in laws, policies and budgets

We advocate for change based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other international legal instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We support people with deafblindness to self-advocate, work with organisations led by people with deafblindness and parents' groups, and gather rigorous research and evidence.

We were closely involved in developing the Second Global Report on Deafblindness, launched in 2022/23 by the World Federation of Deafblindness. This is a vital advocacy tool shedding light on the situation of people with deafblindness globally and providing recommendations for better inclusion of people with deafblindness in services, systems and programmes.

**In Romania**, after ten years of campaigning by Sense International Romania, early intervention has been formally embedded in the Romanian education system. New legislation allows for the establishment of services nationwide and the government is using pioneering services set up by Sense International Romania as a best practice model.

**In Nepal**, due to the advocacy efforts of Sense International's partners, the Ministry of Education has established a first-of-its-kind programme to support resource classes for



children with deafblindness. This will ensure children with deafblindness are included in the education system and receive quality education in Nepal.

**In Tanzania**, we made significant progress towards our Education Service Resource and Assessment Centre (ESRAC) model being adopted nationally. The Tanzanian President's Office Regional Authority and Local Government – responsible for managing district and regional services – released three guidelines developed by Sense International, including on establishing ESRACs at local authorities across the country, on the implementation of an inclusive education strategy and on assistive devices in schools. The district governments in Misungwi and Shinyanga have already begun work on setting up their own ESRACs.

## **Sense International: plans for 2023/24**

In 2023/24, we will continue to implement the refreshed 5-year strategy we put in place last year. We will deliver work on early intervention, inclusive education, and vocational training and livelihoods, alongside advocacy, and training and knowledge sharing, so that people with deafblindness are meaningfully included in systems and societies.

## **Quality and safeguarding**

### Quality

We continue to maintain 94% 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rating from the Care Quality Commission across our accommodation services in England. Our services in Northern Ireland and Wales are also 'assured' by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) respectively.

This year we returned to completing audits in person (post Covid-19) to ensure the quality, safety and compliance of services, and also completed a full review of our compliance audit process to improve user experience and gain a better understanding of compliance within services.

Our independently chaired Quality Board continues to meet quarterly to review evidence of quality assurance across Sense services and agree recommendations.



Our practice development team, which provides support across Sense services nationally, has been restructured to reflect current needs. This includes:

- An increased focus on positive behaviour support, including a review of our support.
- A new sexuality and relationships advisor role.
- A new suite of training known as the Intervenor Pathway, to improve skills and knowledge of support teams.
- A new centralised process for recording behaviour report forms.

## Inclusion

The Sense User Reference Group (SURG) is a group of people receiving a Sense service who volunteer to give valuable feedback that helps us shape service delivery and continuously improve the way we meet people's needs. Last year, the group met both virtually and in-person. They were involved in developing a transport and travel audit, fed into campaigns and research, and have contributed to a review of our recruitment process. They also worked with us on our sexuality and relationships policy, and shared what safeguarding means to them.

Our Experts by Experience (EXE) – people who have lived experience of social care – are employed by Sense to ensure the design and delivery of our services are person centred from the perspective of those using the services. They have contributed to our audit process and shared their experiences relating to cost of living, transport and travel. We plan to develop this project further during 2023/24.

Our Working Together for Change (WTFC) programme is part of our yearly feedback process, demonstrating how we listen to the people we support and use their experiences to help improve what we do. The information gathered through the programme is fed into our policy and research work, as well as our arts, sports and wellbeing programmes so that we can design meaningful activities collaboratively. Feedback from eight workshops held around the country will be used to develop local and national action plans, and steer delivery over the next three years.



## Safeguarding

We take safeguarding very seriously at Sense, and continually ensure our approaches reflect legislation and emerging best practice, including for online and digital services.

Our Safeguarding Board is independently chaired and meets regularly to review policies, processes and procedures. It also makes recommendations, including monitoring levels of training and awareness across all of Sense.

We're committed to the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal, which means we focus on the personalised outcomes that the people we support want. This year we are developing ways of supporting people to have a better understanding of what is abuse and keeping safe.

## Fundraising

The increasing cost of living has disproportionately affected the people we support, but it's affected most people in some way. During 2022/23, our supporters continued to show amazing generosity and energy in support of our work during a financially challenging time. We would like to thank every single person that has supported Sense, and given their time, money and voice to our vital work.

People's enormous generosity through this time meant that we raised £12,875,000 for the work of Sense and Sense International. This includes:

- £3,864,000 from 168 supporters who made a special bequest to remember Sense in their Will. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and thanks to their loved ones.
- Following a campaign online and on TV, we also received 1,028 new enquiries from people interested in leaving money to Sense in their Will.
- Supporters helped fund our vital work to ease the crisis in the cost of living facing disabled people. Grantmakers and philanthropists generously donated more than £100,000 and, in February, we released an emergency appeal to the public. The appeal raised £191,000 to help fund a second round of our emergency grants scheme, with £100,000 restricted specifically for grants to disabled households. 1,000 disabled households benefitted from this financial support.



- Our amazing individual supporters donated £614,000 to our Children's Specialist Services at Christmas. The appeal featured six-year-old Thomas – who has CHARGE Syndrome – and his family, who attended a special Sense Christmas family day fully tailored to meet his needs.
- Over 750 people ran, cycled and trekked for Sense. Another 700 registered for our very first Facebook challenge, taking on 3,100 squats in August.
- Over 335 people across the country signed up to host a Sensational Tea Party to raise funds and awareness for our work.
- More than 330 groups, companies and individuals engaged with us to raise funds and awareness in local communities.
- 1,750 supporters signed up to participate in Sense Sign School, raising money and helping people learn British Sign Language. For £10 a month, people receive a set of flash cards, conversation guides and access to teaching videos by Deaf people who use Sense services.
- Through campaigns and appeals on TV, online, and in newspapers and magazines, we received donations from 13,342 brand new supporters.
- 150 trusts and foundations generously supported Sense, donating over £1.1 million to help deliver excellent services and test new projects, so that more people with complex disabilities can live their lives to the full.
- 38 people supported us with their personal philanthropy, enabling life-changing programmes across the UK.
- Grantmakers and philanthropists generously donated more than £500,000 to open new Sense Hubs in Loughborough and Denbigh, helping us reach more people with complex disabilities than ever before.
- We opened ten new Sense charity shops and opened our first donation station super store. This convenient location for dropping off donations for nearby shops has been hugely successful and people have generously donated nearly 1,000 bags each week since it opened in March. We're now rolling out new IT technology in our shops to make it easier for people to support us, donate and volunteer via in-shop tablets.



## **Our commitment to fundraise responsibly**

Maintaining the trust of our supporters is critical – that is why honesty and transparency is at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to follow best practice in fundraising and marketing. We are members of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising and registered with the Fundraising Regulator, whose Code of Practice we follow.

We adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements, and ensure that our policies, guidelines and processes are regularly reviewed. We have strict guidelines about fundraising from vulnerable people and we never put pressure on anyone to donate.

In 2022/23 Sense worked with four professional fundraisers to support our fundraising. We closely monitor our supplier partners and those that fundraise on our behalf, to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We work extremely hard to ensure supporters and the public have a positive experience of Sense, but we recognise we do not always get it right. You can find our complaints policy on the Sense website – we take all complaints and concerns seriously and value the feedback this provides.

Over the last year, our supporter services team received 57 complaints. We always respond quickly to requests to change the way we contact people and ensure that we manage our supporters' personal details in a respectful and secure manner. We also review our data management procedures on a regular basis.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator to ensure that we are transparent and respectful, and that we champion best practice and adhere to regulations. During the reporting period, Sense received 42 requests through the Fundraising Preference Service, asking us not to send fundraising requests. No complaints were made to the Fundraising Regulator about Sense during this period.

If you would like to talk to us about fundraising, please contact us on:  
supporterservices@sense.org.uk or 0300 330 9257.



## Our volunteers

We were supported by more than 2,000 incredible volunteers across 2022/23, who provided vital support in our shops, as well as our services and activities.

**Sense Holidays** delivered 18 unforgettable holidays, thanks to huge help from volunteers.

**Sense shop** volunteers are a vital part of our retail operation and support valuable engagement in our local communities. We're pleased to report that our volunteer community has grown in number since the pandemic resulting in rich opportunities for them whilst helping increase our sales and engagement.

**Virtual Buddying** is an important way that volunteers can help us tackle loneliness and social isolation. We have continued to develop the role of volunteers in this programme, expanded recruitment and welcomed many new volunteers.

We're so thankful for the time, energy and commitment our volunteers give to support our work. Volunteers' Week 2022 was a chance for us to demonstrate this, to celebrate our volunteers, and to show them how valued and appreciated they are. In 2022/23 we took the opportunity to review our current volunteering offer, and will launch a revised approach and strategy in 2024.

## Our people

In 2022/23 our talented and dedicated workforce continued to ensure that our services remained safe and secure for the people we support. Everyone, from those directly involved in looking after the people we support, to those working in office functions that keep the organisation running efficiently and effectively, played a vital role.

### How we supported our people

Last year, we continued to focus on wellbeing. We held feedback sessions with people from across the organisation to discuss their thoughts on wellbeing at work. This feedback was used to generate a wellbeing action plan, ready to launch and put into practice for 2023-24.



We continue to offer the Sense Plus rewards portal which offers discounts and cashback from a range of well-known retailers and has a dedicated wellbeing centre with resources to help our people manage their mental, physical and financial wellbeing. This platform also links to our employee assistance programme, which offers our people confidential support and counselling on a wide range of topics.

We also gathered feedback via our employee forum representatives about how the rapidly increasing cost of living was affecting them. The executive team discussed this at length with the Board of Trustees and it was decided to be proactive and award our staff an interim cost of living pay increase during 2022-23.

We introduced the next phase of our Sense People system, Employee Self Service, which allows people to update their personal information and gives them ownership of their data.

### Recruiting new talent

Recruitment remains challenging nationally within social care and across the board. Our talent acquisition team successfully launched our first digital campaign, which ran twice and resulted in over 16,000 people visiting our new careers site. The team also used more direct recruitment tools, such as LinkedIn.

A new applicant tracking system was successfully introduced, which has increased our efficiency in recruiting and onboarding new people.

### Engaging and communicating with our people

Last year, we launched Sense Engage to provide a more interactive, easy to use intranet where we can share news, team information, policies and links to our systems. Our people can now easily find contact information for colleagues, comment on blogs or articles and customise their homepage. We have trained ambassadors from across the organisation to contribute content ensuring Sense Engage is kept up to date.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of our continued equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journey, we ran webinars across the year for our people to attend with guest speakers talking to us about topics



such as the journey to becoming transgender and recognising the signs of domestic abuse. We launched a Non-binary and Transgender Inclusion Policy and promoted eLearning modules on understanding gender, sexual orientation and the history of Pride.

Our EDI board met regularly over the year to input into our EDI plans and activities. We now have four employee networks – the disability network, the ethnic diversity network, the LGBTQ+ network and the wellbeing network. These networks continue to raise awareness and promote an inclusive culture.

In addition to reporting on our gender pay gap this year, we opted to report on our ethnicity and disability pay gaps for the first time. The pay gaps at Sense are as follows:

- Gender – 0.4 per cent
- Disability – 0 per cent
- Ethnicity – 2.5 per cent

The results are generally very positive and reflect our work in this area, which includes introducing a new pay strategy and developing more inclusive talent acquisition practices. We recognise more must be done, however, to completely eradicate pay gaps and deliver the truly equal, diverse and inclusive workplace we strive for.

To help accelerate our progress in this area, we created a new role of Head of Inclusion and Wellbeing and the postholder joined Sense in March 2023.

### Senior management pay

Sense is a complex organisation which works across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our workforce is engaged in a wide variety of work. As well as in health and social care, providing specialist personalised support to help people communicate and make the most of their potential, we work in education, campaigning and supporter engagement. Meanwhile, our retail arm runs over 100 shops in England and Wales.

Our sister organisation, Sense International, works with partners in East Africa, parts of Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.



Salaries for the Chief Executive and the executive team are set and reviewed by the remuneration committee, which is a sub-committee of our Board of Trustees. The benefits available are in line with other employees, and pay is externally benchmarked in a similar way.

## **The governance of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

During 2022/23, and up to the adoption of the annual report and financial statements by the Board, there have been 17 Trustees, some of whom were in post for part of the year. Trustees are also (for the purposes of company law) Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. Their names are set out later in this report.

Under the current Articles, Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees and can serve two terms of four years. Those co-opted can be reappointed annually, up to a maximum of eight years.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) usually meets four times a year and Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings.

### **Sub-committees**

- The Board is supported by four sub-committees: Finance and Audit, Remuneration, Nominations and Engagement. Each sub-committee has written Terms of Reference, which are reviewed as necessary and included in the Governance Handbook. The Board appoints the members of the sub-committees annually and receives either the minutes from their meetings, or reports of their activities, with any recommendations.

### **Finance and Audit sub-committee**

The Finance and Audit sub-committee's main purposes are to:

- Ensure that financial resources are deployed appropriately in furtherance of the charity's strategic objectives.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of Sense's internal and external auditing procedures and outcomes.



- Report to and advise the Board on all matters within the purview of the Committee.

Committee membership comprises at least three Trustees, in addition to the Chair (the Honorary Treasurer). Apart from Trustees, the Committee can co-opt new members who they feel will bring relevant financial expertise.

The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources attend the meetings.

### **Nominations sub-committee**

The role of the Nominations sub-committee is to:

- Identify skills gaps in the membership of the Board of Trustees.
- Oversee the recruitment process of Board members and recommend prospective Trustees to the Board for appointment or co-option, ensuring that, once appointed, they have an appropriate induction.

Membership of the sub-committee comprises at least one other Trustee, in addition to the Chair. The Chief Executive and the Head of Governance attend the meetings.

Prospective Trustees are interviewed by the Nominations sub-committee and, if successful, their appointment is recommended to the Board. With the agreement of the Chair, nominees are invited to a Board meeting as observers, following which, with the agreement of the Board, they are appointed or co-opted as Trustees.

New Trustees receive a comprehensive induction pack. An appropriate induction plan is also put in place, which involves meetings with senior staff, internal and external training as necessary, and visits to Sense's services as appropriate.

### **Remuneration sub-committee**

The Remuneration sub-committee ensures that Sense's remuneration strategy for the Chief Executive and members of the executive team, and its implementation, is perceived by all stakeholders to be transparent, fair and effective; that total remuneration is commensurate with personal and corporate performance and market expectations; and



that overall packages enable Sense to recruit suitably skilled, qualified and experienced people.

The membership comprises the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, with a quorum of two. The Chief Executive is a non-voting ex officio member but is not present for discussions regarding their own remuneration. The Director of People may be asked to attend for certain items.

### **Engagement sub-committee**

The Engagement sub-committee is responsible for advising the Board about fundraising and marketing matters, monitoring the implementation of the Engagement Strategy, providing oversight of key activity, campaigns and outcomes and making recommendations about plans and activities.

The committee has at least one member in addition to the Chair and can co-opt external members. The meetings are attended by the Group Director of Engagement.

### **Executive team**

The Board delegates day-to-day operational management of the organisation to the Chief Executive. The broad areas of delegation, for which the Chief Executive is accountable, have been agreed by the Board and are set out in the Governance Handbook.

To ensure these responsibilities are discharged effectively, the Chief Executive is responsible for appointing, managing and developing senior staff to take direct responsibility for these areas, and for putting in place appropriate reporting and assurance mechanisms.

The executive team meets regularly and includes the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operational Services, Group Director of Finance & Resources, Group Director of Engagement, four other functional Directors and the Head of Governance.

### **The Governance Handbook**

In addition to the areas covered above (Terms of Reference and delegated matters), the 'Governance Handbook' also includes sections on the values of Sense, our commitment to



diversity, the appointment of Trustees, and role profiles for the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, other Trustees; the Trustee induction process; the Trustee Code of Conduct; the Trustee conflict of interest policy; and the Board's agenda cycle. An updated version (the 7th) was last approved by the Board in March 2022.

## The Charity Governance Code

The Code specifies that the Boards of large charities should publish brief statements in the annual report on three areas:

### **Principle 4: Describing the charity's approach to risk.**

This can be found on page 47.

### **Principle 5: Explaining how the board is reviewed.**

As reported last year there was an internal Board review in 2021, resulting in the overall conclusion that the Board operates very effectively as a team, in a positive and transparent atmosphere and makes decisions well. It was not thought necessary to conduct a further review last year, but consideration will be given to having a review during 2023/24.

### **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

The Board is committed to having a diverse membership, with a reasonable balance across various areas including race, gender, age, involvement of people with complex disabilities or their family members, and people from various professional backgrounds, as well as to working to achieve greater diversity.

Following the Governance review's identification of the need to increase the diversity of Trustees in 2021, noting the under-representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and the importance of recruiting Trustees with a lived experience of disabilities, a fourth Trustee with lived experience of disability was appointed this year.

The Board will continue to receive updates on the progress of the EDI strategy.



## Public benefit

Trustees have referred to the information contained in the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The information contained in this report about our services and achievements gives clear examples of how our work is beneficial and brings public benefit. Our objectives for next year show that Sense will continue to provide public benefit in line with our objects.

## The Sense Group

### Working together

The Sense Group comprises two discrete legal entities: Sense and Sense International, in addition to the subsidiaries as set out below.

Both Sense and Sense International are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee, with their own Boards and Memorandum and Articles. The objects of both charities are similar in referring to supporting people who are deafblind and have sensory impairments.

Our shared vision is a world where no one who is deafblind or has complex disabilities is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Each organisation runs its own activities to work towards this vision.

Information about Sense International is given below, but additional details can be found in their own annual report and financial statements.

Sense is the trading name of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association, which is a registered charity (charity number: 289868) and a company limited by guarantee (company number: 01825301). It is governed by its Articles of Association.

Sense works primarily in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the Corporate Trustee of the Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham). It is the sole member of Sense International and Sense4Enterprise Limited, and also holds 100% of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited.

The Objects approved in 2021 are set out in Article 3 as follows:



### 3 Objects

The objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:

3.1 primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments;

3.2 and to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support

(together, the "beneficiaries").

**Sense International** is a registered charity (charity number: 1076497), a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986) and is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association. It works on a global basis, raising the needs of people with deafblindness and working with partner organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Sense is the only member of Sense International.

Sense has the following of subsidiaries:

**Helping Sense Limited** is Sense's trading company (company number: 02214430). It is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association, and its main activity is the sale of goods through Sense's charity shops. The profits from its activities are donated to Sense.

**Sense4Enterprise Limited** (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities.

**The Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham)** is a registered charity (charity number: 528908). The Charity Commission granted a linking order, permitting its activities to be reported within Sense's report without the need to file its own separate annual report and financial statements. It is governed by its trust deed but does not operate in its own right.



This is the consolidated annual report and financial statements for all the Sense organisations. Sense International separately publishes its own annual reports and financial statements that describe its activities and finances in more detail.

## **Sense Group Trustees and senior staff**

### Members of the Board from 1 April 2022 to the present

Dr Justin Molloy (Chair)

Ashling Barvé (Vice chair - resigned June 2023)

Gillian Wood (Vice Chair - resigned 7 December 2022)

Andrew Pearson

Saeed Ahmed

George Aivazoglou (resigned 11 May 2022)

Graham Callister (resigned 7 February 2023)

Mark Cammies

Ben Cooper

Vivienne Hoskins

Simon Jones

Mythily Katsaris (Trustee of Sense International)

Benedict Leigh (resigned June 2023)

Amanda Mortensen (appointed 26 April 2023)

Brian Symington

Nathan Taylor



Mark Westwell

During this year there were five female and twelve male Trustees/Directors.

### Sense International Board from 1 April 2022 to the present

Sunil Sheth (Chair) (retired 24 September 2022)

Raaxeet Shah (Chair from 24 September 2022)

Sunil Shah (Treasurer)

Maria Arce-Moreira

Richard Cooper

Nicholas Corby

Mythily Katsaris

Dean Lumer (retired 24 September 2022)

Suzi Nandera (appointed April 2023)

Lucy Roberts (resigned 6 April 2023)

Verity Stiff (retired 24 September 2022)

Lisa Szucs (appointed April 2023)

Kiran Virdee (appointed April 2023)

Lauren Watters

Gillian Wood

During the year there were eight female and seven male Trustees/Directors.

### Sense executive team

**Richard Kramer** – Chief Executive (also Chief Executive of Sense International)



**Maria Horton** – Group Director of Operations

**Catherine Still** – Group Director of Finance and Resources

**Louise Robertshaw** – Group Director of Engagement

**Alison Marshall** – Director of Sense International (resigned August 2022)

**Kavita Prasad** – Director of Sense International (appointed August 2022)

**Adrian Darkin** – Director of Trading

**Emma Evans** – Director of People

**Jonathan Monk** – Director of Operational Programmes (resigned September 2022)

**David Rutt** – Director of Data, Insight and Technology (appointed February 2023)

In the year there were six female Directors and four male Directors.

The Trustees' Report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Molloy', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Dr Justin Molloy, Chair

7 December 2023

## **Section 172 statement**

Sense is required by the Companies Act 2006 to make an annual statement about how Directors have 'promoted the success of the company' having regard to the following matters set out in Section 172 of that Act:



### **a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term**

A number of such decisions have been made in the last year, including setting up a cost of living Support Fund for the people which Sense supports. We were very aware that the people which Sense supports are particularly badly affected by the increasing cost of living, and struggle to pay for essentials such as food and energy. We know that they face extra heating costs and energy costs to charge wheelchairs and other essential medical equipment. We worked with an external partner, to run and administer the grant programme.

### **b) The interests of the company's employees**

We gave an additional cost of living payment for our frontline staff who are disproportionately affected by the rising cost of living.

### **c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

Our key stakeholders are the people which Sense supports across all our services and their families. We regularly communicate with our suppliers. Other important stakeholders are our supporters and volunteers. We continue to work with other charities in our sector and the Board and Engagement Committee are regularly updated about these relationships.

### **d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**

One of the key aims of our services is to enable the people we support to feel part of their local communities. Our Trading arm also builds key community links through our shops, which are key ambassadors for Sense. The shops hold fun weeks, enabling members of the public to take part in a range of activities and to learn more about Sense and the people we support. The shops also sell items which would otherwise go to landfill – an important contribution to the environment (and in line with Sense's Environment Policy).

Our Trading Board is attended by the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee and other Trustees and receives regular reports on community activities.



### **e) The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

The good reputation of Sense, both in terms of our services and our business relationships, is critical to our long-term future.

Our services are scrutinised not only by our quality team, but by the Quality and Safeguarding Boards which have an external Chair and members, with direct input from Trustees.

We also have a Whistleblowing Policy in place, giving access to an independent external organisation.

The Finance and Audit Committee has responsibility for monitoring the impact of the Policy.

### **f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company**

Sense has almost 1,000 company members. In line with our constitution, we have not held an AGM for the last two years. We send a letter from the Chair to our members setting out the key issues discussed by the Board over the year. This goes to all active supporters of Sense, rather than just Company members.

## **Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

The Trustees (who are also directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair



view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company/group for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2019);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In accordance with Section 418, directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each director in office at the date the directors' report is approved, that:

- so far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company and the group's auditors are unaware; and



- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

## Internal financial controls

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, financial and otherwise, in place. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A five-year strategic plan and an annual budget approved by the Board. A number of matters are specifically reserved for the Board's approval.
- Regular consideration of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and the Board.
- The development of policy documents covering all major strategic and operational activities. The executive team reviews these with appropriate regularity and consultation.

## Anti-bribery policy

Sense has an anti-bribery policy, which sets out the definition of bribery and makes it the responsibility of all employees and Trustees to prevent and report any bribery issues. If necessary, this can be through Sense's Whistleblowing procedure which provides a number of possible contacts, including an external organisation.



## Financial review of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association 2021/22

### Overview

In common with many charities, the year ended 31 March 2023 was a testing year for Sense. Income in some of our services has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and we experienced challenges in recruitment and retention of staff, particularly within our social care workforce. It was also a tough year for our colleagues and those we support because of the adverse national economic environment. As a result, we took steps to help both the people we support and our colleagues to cope with the rising cost of living.

With reserves not spent because of the quiet years of the pandemic, we had always planned to have a number of years where we invested from our own resources. Instead of spending this on innovation projects as anticipated, we directed these resources into a mid-year pay rise for all staff, and also distributed grants to families with disabled children. This helped families we know are disproportionately negatively affected by higher food and utility costs.

We were able to make these investments in the long-term wellbeing of our most important stakeholders because of our level of reserves and prudent financial management in previous years.

Whilst we were insulated from the worst effects of the much higher electricity and gas prices during this financial year, we will face significant cost increases this year as our fixed price electricity contracts expire.

The final quarter of this year was particularly tough because of difficulties recruiting across all our activities and issues with keeping costs under control. We also saw a downturn in voluntary income in this period and delays in opening new shops added to the less favourable outcome for the year.

Reserves were boosted in the year however, because of the exit from our deficit funding agreement linked to the final salary pension scheme which paid back a healthy surplus from the scheme and eliminated Sense's liability towards the scheme for good.



## Financial highlights

Income from commissioned services increased in the year by £5.3 million, partly as a result of fee increases required because of the increase in the National Living Wage (NLW), which went up by 6.6% in April 2022, and partly because of additional services delivered in our college and day services. Following the acquisition of Otterhayes in April 2021, and the purchase of the former RNIB college in Loughborough in September 2020, no further acquisitions were made in the year. Activity levels in day services and education services increased, with recovery from the lower take up of these services during the pandemic evident.

Whilst commissioned income increased in the year, expenditure to deliver these services also increased during the year, not only as a result of the increase in NLW, but also because of the pay rise we awarded in November. Additionally, with recruitment tight, we spent more money on agency staff to ensure services were always delivered safely. The significant increase in utility costs affected us in some locations as one of our smaller fixed price contracts for electricity expired during the year and we were forced to absorb cost increases in excess of 600% in some cases. Thankfully these very high rates did not last long and were only applicable to a small part of our estate.

In the year, Sense increased expenditure on programmes by £506k, reflecting our focus on delivering on our strategic objectives. We invested in our multi-sensory team – particularly in their work with children and young people, additional spend on our holiday programme, and more money invested in buddying and supporting our volunteers.

During the year we opened 10 shops – slightly fewer than we had planned – to end the year with 125 shops trading. Some openings were delayed for various reasons and this affected sales in the year. The retail workforce was also affected by fewer candidates, and recruitment into our shops was more problematic than we have ever experienced, resulting in some shops being closed more than we would have liked. This, in turn, affected income. This challenge has eased in the current financial year.



Fundraising income held up well against last year, with individual giving and legacy income consistent with the previous year, and growth seen across national events as the opportunity for in-person events returned after the pandemic. We did not hit our planned growth targets, however.

Sense made two significant investments funded from reserves during the year: the first was £0.5 million in grants distributed to families with disabled children to help with the rising cost of living; and the second was a mid-year pay rise (£0.75 million) that we awarded to all colleagues, for the same reason. These costs are included in operating costs.

Net increase in funds was boosted by a non-recurring £8.6m cash receipt for the pension fund surplus on final exit from the final salary pension scheme that Sense had been making annual deficit reduction payments into since ceasing to be an active employer in 2014. This surplus arose because of the higher interest rates, particularly on gilts, that developed during the second half of the year in the UK.

As a result, Sense moved £5.3 million (2022: £12.9 million) into reserves at the end of the year, bringing total reserves to £50.8 million (2022: £45.4 million), of which £2.3 million (2022: £2.4 million) are reserved, £8.5 million (2022: £11.1 million) are designated and £40.0 million (2022: £31.0 million) are unrestricted.

During the year we used part of the pension surplus to repay the £5.1m balance of the bank loan taken out to support the construction of the TouchBase Pears community hub in Selly Oak. Sense now has no borrowings.

As a result of the expiry of the deficit funding agreement with the LGPS, Sense also no longer records a liability for the pension deficit.

Cash and equivalents reduced in the year, despite the positive movement of surplus into reserves, reflecting capital expenditure of £5.3 million (2022: £3.3 million), as well as the repayment of the bank loan of £5.1 million. Capital investment was made in our offices at Pentonville Road, which we have now fully refurbished and are sharing with other



charities. We also invested in our site at Loughborough to create our new Hub, as well as planned investment in opening new shops.

## Reserves

The Trustees regularly review free reserves to ensure that there are adequate funds to support all the activity that Sense Group undertakes. This review reflects the need to maintain a considerable property estate in order to continue to provide the high quality of services to the people we support, to fund investment projects to grow services and to ensure an adequate contingency is maintained for unforeseen events, especially given the recent pandemic impact.

This year Designated Reserves have been set by the Trustees at £8.5 million (2022: £11.1 million) reflecting planned investments in service delivery and achieving the strategic plan. The target level of reserves has reduced due to of the elimination of the pension liability and bank debt and the investment made in the year from previously designated funds.

We also consider unforeseen risks when setting a minimum level of free reserves. We define free reserves as unrestricted reserves minus fixed assets (offset by borrowings taken out to support the purchase of those assets) minus any designated reserves.

Free reserves at March 2023 were £5.5 million (2022: £5.8 million). After considering various scenarios and the risks attached to each of our income streams, the Trustees consider that minimum free reserves of £4.7 million are required (2022: £3.9 million). We are therefore above our target.

## Going concern

The financial statements show that our cash and reserves position means that we are able to fund foreseeable operational and capital expenditure: last year we eliminated all long term debt and liabilities, including the pension liability. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and the risks that might threaten those forecasts.



Together with our risk management policies, the strong reserves position and no indebtedness allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and that therefore it is appropriate to continue to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

## Pensions

In addition to ongoing defined contribution pension schemes, Sense was previously a member of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), formerly the London Pension Fund Authority, a public sector provider of defined benefit pensions and a traditional pension body for local authorities. Sense closed membership of the LPP scheme to new entrants in 2003 and has since been working to manage the actuarial risk that all defined benefit schemes bring.

In 2014, remaining active members were asked to voluntarily leave the scheme and join the defined contribution scheme offered for all other employees. This transfer took effect in October 2014 and Sense has therefore had no remaining active members in the LPP scheme and no further service liabilities were being incurred for active members since then.

When interest rates, especially gilt yields, rose sharply last year, we requested a cessation valuation effective on 30 September. This revealed a surplus of £8.6 million and has ended the annual deficit funding agreement that had been in place since 2018, signalling the end of Sense's obligation to make any future payments. The surplus was received in December 2022.

Because of the arcane accounting rules in place for final salary pension schemes, it has been necessary to account for the exit from our obligation to the Fund by measuring the difference between the surplus as calculated on an actuarial basis (in order to write back the actuarial liability on the balance sheet (2022: £0.869k) and the surplus as calculated on a cessation basis, and then net this from the actuarial surplus to show the actual surplus received in the year. This has created a higher surplus than that received, offset by a cost which is the difference between the two valuations. These net to the overall gain



experienced in the year. The net effect of these movements are shown clearly on the Statement of Financial Activities.

As a result of the above, a pension fund liability is no longer required on the balance sheet and all obligations to the Fund have now been satisfied.

## Ethical investments

Where relevant, Sense aims to hold ethical investments that are consistent with its charitable objectives.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for the management of risks to the Chief Executive and the executive team.

The executive team is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk, including those identified on departmental risk registers, and for reporting on this to the Finance and Audit sub-committee. The executive team is also responsible for developing risk mitigation strategies and controls, and for implementing actions to minimise or reduce risk to acceptable levels. The risk register is reviewed at every executive meeting, and the departmental risk registers are reviewed by each executive for their areas. The executive agrees which department specific risks should be included on the corporate risk register.

The Finance and Audit sub-committee is responsible for overseeing the establishment and maintenance of good practice in this area and for reporting to the Board at each of its meetings when the corporate risk register is reviewed.

There are currently no risks rated as red after controls have been implemented. Three of the most highly rated amber risks are shown below.



Uncertainty/risk	Possible consequences	Controls being implemented
<p>Staff: We do not have the rewards, training, selection processes or appeal to improve recruitment and retention leading to shortages of skilled staff</p>	<p>We fail to attract the right talent and skills and fail to train those we do attract properly. With poor retention our recruitment activity is high and expensive, and the turnover is disruptive to service delivery and makes it difficult to achieve strategic goals in all areas as we do not have a committed and engaged workforce</p>	<p>We have focus on our digital attraction strategy, enhancing our employer branding and thus quality of applications. We have developed a better data dashboard to encourage data driven decisions</p> <p>We have a new pay policy which gives more flexibility to hiring managers and recognises contribution helping to improve retention</p> <p>We have implemented a well being action plan to deliver wider benefits to colleagues</p>
<p>The programme to develop regional Touch Bases is unsuccessful because of lack of funding, or leads to financial losses</p>	<p>We fail to reach our strategic outcomes which could lead to loss of confidence from donors, supporters and commissioners which may impact on future funding relationships</p>	<p>We have invested in project management capacity to support oversight through the programme board. Funding requirements to deliver the Hubs are aligned to the fundraising strategy.</p>



<p>Sense is subject to, or experiences disruption from a significant cyber-attack</p>	<p>Sense systems are unavailable impacting on service delivery. There is a significant data breach or inability to communicate which leads to financial loss. There is severe reputational impact with regulatory and contractual implications</p>	<p>We have implemented the recommendations from the Cyber security audit. We have tested the Business Continuity and Cyber Security Incident Plans with all leaders across Sense. We have taken out cyber security insurance. We are adopting the Cyber Essentials Framework from NCSC and seeking accreditation</p>
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## Energy and carbon report 2022/23

The table below gives a summary of our energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions for the financial year 2022/23, and also compares with the data from 2021/22 and 2019/20. Due to the impacts of Covid-19 across the organisation during 2020/21 and 2021/22, this report also shows the emissions for the base year of 2019/2020 along with the comparison between the years since 2019/2020, as this is deemed to reflect the actual business operations more closely.



### SENSE - GHG Emissions and Energy Use Data for Period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Energy/Activity	Scope - GHG Protocol Corporate Standard	Period 2022/23				Variance v 2021/22			Variance v 2019/20		
		kWh	Emission Factor	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %
Combustion of Natural Gas	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	4,601,487	0.18000	828.3	35.10%	-355,048	-79.6	-7.2%	59,132	-6.8	1.3%
Combustion of Oil	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	132,492	0.25000	33.1	1.40%	-88,547	-21.4	-40.1%	29,022	7.6	28.0%
Transport Own Vehicles (Diesel)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	1,744,309	0.24000	418.6	17.74%	210,925	55.4	13.8%	-595,500	-153.7	-25.5%
Transport Own Vehicles (Petrol)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	795,694	0.23000	183.0	7.76%	492,450	113.3	162.4%	614,438	140.6	339.0%
	<b>Scope 1 - TOTALS</b>	<b>7,273,982</b>		<b>1,463.0</b>	<b>62.00%</b>	<b>259,780</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>107,092</b>	<b>-12.3</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Electricity	Scope 2 (Energy Indirect)	3,935,187	0.19338	761.0	32.25%	19,030	-70.5	0.5%	-193,246	-294.2	-4.7%
Transport - employee-owned vehicles business travel	Scope 3 (Other Indirect)	580,326	0.23400	135.8	5.75%	-6,203	-0.6	-1.1%	-525,229	-127.4	-47.5%
<b>TOTALS (Gross)</b>		<b>11,789,495</b>		<b>2,359.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>272,607</b>	<b>-3.4</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>611,382</b>	<b>-434.0</b>	<b>-4.9%</b>
<b>Buildings Intensity Ratio (kWh/m<sup>2</sup> &amp; tCO2/m<sup>2</sup>)</b>		<b>166</b>		<b>0.031</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>-0.001</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>-156</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-48.4%</b>
<b>Transport Intensity Ratio (kWh/FTE &amp; tCO2/FTE)</b>		<b>1,603</b>		<b>0.379</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>0.032</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>-573</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>-26.3%</b>

### Emission changes v 2021/22

The figures for 2020/21 and 2021/22 were significantly deflated due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in a significant reduction in emissions during those years due to reduced activity across the organisation. Comparisons made between the past year and 2021/22 therefore show unrealistic increases in emissions across a large number of activities. However, the table above shows comparisons between 2019 and last year which are more reflective of normal business operations.

As a result of these comparisons the following observations are noted:

1. The property floor area has increased from 2019/20, but has slightly reduced from the figures reported in 2021/22:
  - 27,279m<sup>2</sup> in 2019/20
  - 42,205m<sup>2</sup> in 2020/21
  - 56,030m<sup>2</sup> in 2021/22
  - 52,169m<sup>2</sup> in 2022/23



This increase since 2019/20 is reflected by the increased number of retail units across the portfolio. This increase in floor area has also had a significant impact on the building intensity ratio, since 2019/20.

2. Gas consumption has reduced by circa 7.2%. The witnessed gas reduction is believed to be associated to the reduction in property floor area of 7.4%.
3. Oil consumption represents a very small proportion of the estate's emissions but has seen a significant percentage reduction. This is believed to be due the method of recording consumption. Currently no meters are in place and consumption is based in delivery notes. Site delivery data is not truly reflective of site consumption and therefore year on year variances will occur until such time as we are able to install consumption meters to these locations.
4. When the data for 2022/23 is compared with 2019/20 data, it can be seen that both diesel and petrol emissions fell over the Covid-19 pandemic. However, as the business is now returning to normal working practices, the transport impacts have risen back to pre-Covid levels. The current figures, however, have reflected the move away from a diesel fleet to petrol.
5. Employee Own Vehicle emissions has decreased slightly from 2021/22 figures but is still well below pre-pandemic levels and this is due to revised working practices and the ability for staff to work from home.

## **Company information**

Sense is a registered Charity No. 289868. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England & Wales No. 01825301. Registered office at 101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG.

## **The reporting period**

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## **Organisational boundaries**

We have used the Financial Control model as the basis to calculate our emissions, including everything that we own and operate within England & Wales.



## **Quantification and reporting methodology**

We have followed the UK HM Government “Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance March 2019”. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard.

Data has been gathered from the following sources:

- Gas Combustion – Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.
- Oil Combustion – Supplier delivery quantities (litres) for all fuels.
- Electricity – Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.
- Transport – Own Fleet – Finance records for litres of fuel (Petrol & Diesel) purchased.
- Transport – Business Mileage employee own vehicles – Individual employee expense claim records for business mileages during the reporting period. We have then used the “average car: unknown fuel” factors to calculate kWh & tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

In calculating the emissions, we have used the UK Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, conversion factors 2021 – revised January 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2022>

revised January 2022

## **Intensity ratios**

For all our property energy usage we have chosen a ratio based on the Floor Area GIA.

For our transport energy usage, we have chosen a ratio based on our number of employees (FTE).

## **Energy efficiency action**

The past year has seen intense action regarding the organisation’s aims of reducing energy consumption and carbon output.



The Organisation now has a stated vision of being carbon neutral by 2040 and, to that end, has allocated resources to form a dedicated team and a budget to carry out carbon and energy reduction projects.

The major contributors to carbon output (property, fleet and supply chain) are now under the direct management of the Sense property team. This has enabled a more co-ordinated approach involving the whole organisation.

Sense is currently considering a fully inclusive environment strategy, and will be looking to publish a new Environmental Policy, and action plan this year.

Our London office has been fully refurbished, incorporating LED lighting to reduce energy and incorporated an agile working approach to the office environment, which has released office space to enable us to incorporate another charity tenant, thus increasing the more efficient use of floor space. This approach has also been rolled out in our major offices in Crayford and Wakefield.

When we extend our property portfolio, such as new buildings (for example shops and warehouses) we continue our standard specification incorporating low energy measures, and as a minimum include LED lighting and thermostatically controlled heating and increased insulation where appropriate.

Our trading operation recycles more than 5,500 tonnes per annum of clothing and furniture and there are plans to increase this.

We continue to engage specialist consultants to carry out energy audits on our freehold property portfolio. This will enable us to highlight projects which will have the most effective result in reducing energy use and carbon output.

We have undertaken a major project to change all our electric meters to 'smart' meter. The software that compliments this project will give us on demand information and correct readings. We will be able to analyse the power usage, which in turn will help us to make informed decisions regarding future energy reduction projects.



As part of our planned maintenance budget, our approach has been to take up any opportunity to improve our energy efficiency. Where boilers, windows, and roofs need replacement, this will always be based on A and A+ units where applicable and upgrading to current Building Regulation standards.

As part of a phased improvement to one of our largest properties we are currently replacing all lighting with LED fittings (approximately 700 units) and taking the opportunity to insulate the roof voids.

We have completed our first installation of solar panels.

Throughout our vehicle fleet we are conducting surveys to profile usage and the suitability of electric battery powered vehicles (EVs) instead of fossil fuel powered. We have installed our first EV charging point and plans have been approved for three more to be installed in our larger centres.

Rationalisation of our fleet has seen a decrease of vehicles by 6% and non 'ULEZ' compliant vehicles by 18%. The overall use of vehicles by our own fleet, and mileage undertaken in employee vehicles has decreased significantly.

Finally, we appreciate the importance of having our supply chain adopting the same overall environmental aims and we apply an environmental/sustainability factor along with cost when choosing suppliers.

### **Assurance & verification**

This report and the verification of the data was undertaken by an external independent CIBSE qualified Low Carbon Consultant and ESOS Lead Assessor.



## ***Independent auditors' report to the members of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association Report on the audit of the financial statements***

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### **Opinion**

In our opinion, Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association's group financial statements and parent charitable company financial statements (the "financial statements"):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's and parent charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, and of the group's cash flows, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Annual Report and Financial Statements (the "Annual Report"), which comprise: the consolidated balance sheet and company balance sheet as at 31 March 2023; the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated summary income and expenditure account and the consolidated cash flow statement for the year then ended; the accounting policies; and the notes to the financial statements.

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### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Independence**

We remained independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, which includes the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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### **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

With respect to the Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees, we also considered whether the disclosures required by the UK Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 have been included.



Based on our work undertaken in the course of the audit, the Companies Act 2006 requires us also to report certain opinions and matters as described below.

### *Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees*

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit the information given in the Report of the Trustees including the Strategic Report for the period ended 31 March 2023 is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we did not identify any material misstatements in the Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The trustees are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and its industry/environment, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Charities Act 2011, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- enquiring of management and the Board of Trustees, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Finance and Audit Committee;
- identifying and testing journal entries, including journal entries posted with unusual account combinations to revenue; and
- assessing financial statement disclosures, and testing to supporting documentation, for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditors' report.



### *Use of this report*

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the parent charitable company's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

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## **Other required reporting**

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### **Companies Act 2006 exception reporting**

Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- we have not obtained all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.

*DChan*

Daniel Chan (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
Birmingham  
11 December 2023



## Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2023 £000s	Total 2022 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	10,118	2,757	-	12,875	12,951
Charitable activities	1	57,236	1,918	-	59,154	53,891
Trading		13,708	-	-	13,708	12,375
Investment income	2	297	2	-	299	29
Covid-19 grants	3	-	-	-	-	1,827
Other income	3	491	-	-	491	1,448
<b>Total income</b>		<b>81,850</b>	<b>4,677</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>86,527</b>	<b>82,521</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Raising funds	4	5,580	-	-	5,580	4,858
Charitable activities		65,722	3,936	9	69,667	60,448
Trading		13,914	3	-	13,917	11,796
Other		1,081	-	-	1,081	1,114
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>86,297</b>	<b>3,939</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90,245</b>	<b>78,216</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	5	52	-	-	52	117
Transfers between funds	17	1,250	(1,250)	-	-	-
<b>Net (expense)/income before pension settlement</b>		<b>(3,145)</b>	<b>(512)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(3,666)</b>	<b>4,422</b>
Settlement of defined benefit pension scheme	6,10	(2,675)	-	-	(2,675)	-
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension scheme	10	11,676	-	-	11,676	8,453
<b>Net gain on settlement of defined benefit pension scheme</b>	10	<b>9,001</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,001</b>	<b>8,453</b>
<b>Net increase in funds</b>	7	<b>5,856</b>	<b>(512)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>5,335</b>	<b>12,875</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward	17,18	41,780	3,285	360	45,425	32,550
Net increase in funds	17,18	5,856	(512)	(9)	5,335	12,875
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>	17,18	<b>47,636</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>50,760</b>	<b>45,425</b>

The net income of unrestricted funds is analysed between the general fund and designated funds.



## Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	33,928	31,442
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>33,928</b>	<b>31,442</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		697	451
Debtors	13	10,425	8,818
Investments	14	9,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		5,667	15,708
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>25,789</b>	<b>28,977</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	15	(8,925)	(8,760)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>16,864</b>	<b>20,217</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>50,792</b>	<b>51,659</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	16	(32)	(5,365)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>50,760</b>	<b>46,294</b>
Provisions – pension liability	10	-	(869)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>50,760</b>	<b>45,425</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
General fund	17,18	39,136	31,552
Pension provision	17,18	-	(869)
Designated funds	17,18	8,500	11,097
Restricted funds	17,18	2,773	3,285
Endowment fund	17,18	351	360
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>50,760</b>	<b>45,425</b>

The notes on pages 69 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 58 to 93 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Andrew Pearson, Treasurer  
Registered company number 1825301



## Company balance sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	33,899	31,399
Investments	12	30	30
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>33,929</b>	<b>31,429</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		697	451
Debtors	13	10,060	8,512
Investments	14	9,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		5,258	14,707
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>25,015</b>	<b>27,670</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	15	(8,798)	(8,755)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>16,217</b>	<b>18,915</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>50,146</b>	<b>50,344</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	16	-	(5,333)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>50,146</b>	<b>45,011</b>
Provisions – pension liability	10	-	(869)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>50,146</b>	<b>44,142</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>			
General fund	17,18	38,618	31,183
Pension provision	17,18	-	(869)
Designated funds	17,18	8,500	11,097
Restricted funds	17,18	2,677	2,371
Endowment fund	17,18	351	360
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>50,146</b>	<b>44,142</b>

The notes on pages 69 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 58 to 93 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Andrew Pearson, Treasurer  
Registered company number 1825301



## Consolidated summary income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Income from continuing operations	86,280	82,608
Total expenditure of continuing operations	(90,068)	(77,814)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	(3,788)	4,794
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	52	117
Interest receivable and similar income	299	29
Interest payable and similar charges	(236)	(269)
Net interest and administration costs of defined benefit scheme	(41)	(249)
Remeasurement of pension on cessation of scheme	(2,633)	-
<b>Net (expense)/income for the year</b>	<b>(6,347)</b>	<b>4,422</b>

## Consolidated cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

		2023	2022
	Note	£000s	£000s
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>	22	<b>(3,394)</b>	<b>5,671</b>
<b>Investing activities – investments</b>			
Interest received		299	29
Interest paid		(236)	(269)
Gain on interest rate swap closed		233	-
<b>Investing activities – capital expenditure</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(5,307)	(3,307)
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		63	689
<b>Financing activities</b>			
Bank loan repayments		(5,333)	(2,691)
Refund of defined benefit scheme surplus		8,634	-
<b>(Decrease)/Increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>(5,041)</b>	<b>122</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year		19,708	19,586
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year</b>	25	<b>14,667</b>	<b>19,708</b>



## Accounting policies of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association

### Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Accounting and Reporting for Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, which is applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2020) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act from presenting its individual statement of financial activities.

The net expense of the charity for the year was £6,347.

### Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### Preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis

The financial statements show that cash and reserves are at a healthy level, meaning that revenue expenditure can be comfortably covered in the future. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and have also taken account of the risks that might threaten the expected position, with particular reference to the experiences of the pandemic year.

Trustees have also reviewed the risk register in detail during the year including a review of risk mitigation strategies. Given our risk management policies and strong reserves position, the Trustees believe that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and therefore it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.



## Group financial statements

These financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiaries: Sense International, Helping Sense Limited, and Sense4Enterprise Limited.

### Income recognition

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Fees and allowances receivable for residential care and similar services are accounted for in the period in which the service is provided. Trading income represents goods supplied to customers at invoiced amounts and is recognised at the time of sale. Legacy income is recognised on a receivable basis when it is probable that legacy income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants received in advance which include donor-imposed conditions that specify a time period in which the expenditure of resources can take place are accounted for as deferred income and recognised as a liability.

Donations and legacies is recognised as income when received, except when the income is related to major events. Non-cash donations, other than goods donated for sale through shops, are stated at an estimate of their value to the charity.

### Expenditure

All expenditure, including any irrecoverable VAT, is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

The cost of generating funds represents the cost of organising fundraising events and activities and the operating costs of the charity's shops. The cost of charitable activities includes all expenditure directly relating to the objects of the charity. Support costs are apportioned to the relevant charitable activity on the basis of salary costs incurred.



Governance costs (comprising internal and external audit, strategic costs and Trustees' expenses) are included in support costs.

Redundancy and termination costs are recognised once the decision to terminate has been made, it is probable that termination will occur, and the amount of the obligation can be measured.

## Grant income

Grants received are recognised as income and gross payroll costs are recognised as expenditure. Accruals are made for any grants claimed but outstanding at year end.

Grants received under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund in respect of the charity shops are recognised as State Aid up to the level permitted under UK legislation in any financial period. Income is recognised in other income (see note 3. No monies in respect of this grant were due or accrued for at year end.

Grants were received under the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund which supports adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not have a contract, to reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience. Sense was eligible to claim this grant in respect of accommodation services. The grant pays for additional infection control measures which include the cost of additional staffing including agency staff. Grants received are recognised as income and the costs the grant covers are shown in expenditure. Grants are only recognised when claims have been made and accepted by the distributing local authority when satisfied that the grant has been spent.

## Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended use.



## Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful economic lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold property	2%
Short leasehold properties and long leasehold improvements	Over the remaining life of the lease
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Motor vehicles	25%

Freehold land is not depreciated. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are available for use. Individual fixed assets costing £500 or less are not capitalised.

Negative goodwill fully amortised in the year of acquisition.

## Leases

Operating lease rentals are expensed in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

## Stock

Stock relates to new and second-hand goods purchased for sale through the shops, valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Donated goods and Sense merchandise are valued at nil as their intrinsic value is immaterial.

## Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when an obligation arises to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

## Dilapidations

Provision is made for dilapidations in respect of leasehold properties, principally charity shops. The provision reflects an estimate of the costs to make good the leased property at the expiry of the lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. On expiry of a lease, any expenditure in excess of the accumulated provision is released.



## Pension costs

The Group operates defined contribution schemes for all staff. Contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), a multi-employer defined benefit scheme, are accounted for as a defined contribution scheme and are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), a defined benefit pension scheme closed to new members, are accounted for in accordance with FRS 102. As a result, changes in actuarial assumptions, expected investment return on assets and interest on pension liabilities, are charged to the statement of financial activities in the year.

Differences between actual and expected returns on assets, together with differences arising from changes in the assumptions underlying the present value of scheme liabilities and experience of gains and losses arising on scheme liabilities, are also recognised in the statement of financial activities. The difference between the market value of assets and the present value of future pension liabilities is shown as a provision on the balance sheet.

The Company formally exited the scheme in the year.

## Fixed assets: subsidiary undertakings

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost and written down to their realisable value if there has been a permanent diminution in value.

## Foreign currency

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date.

Exchange differences are recognised within net income/(expenditure).



## Allocation of funds

General funds represent unrestricted funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds are those that have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes as detailed in the funds note. Restricted funds are funds that must be used in accordance with specific instructions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Endowment funds represent assets that must be held permanently by the charity, principally properties. Any capital gains or losses arising on sale of those assets forms part of the fund. Depreciation of endowed property is charged against the fund.

Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

## Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Specific bad debts are recognised and provided for as appropriate.



## Principal accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of these accounting policies, management is required to make judgments, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates, and the estimates, along with their underlying assumptions, are continually reviewed.

No significant estimates or judgements have been made in these financial statements.



# Notes to the financial statements of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, for the year ended 31 March 2023

## 1. Income

<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>2023 £000s</b>	<b>2022 £000s</b>
Fundraising	9,010	8,972
Legacies	3,865	3,979
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,875</b>	<b>12,951</b>

<b>Income from charitable activities</b>	<b>2023 £000s</b>	<b>2022 £000s</b>
Care and Support Midlands	12,325	11,300
Care and Support East	11,727	11,274
Care and Support South	14,735	11,580
Care and Support North	9,294	8,969
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,237	3,116
Care and Support Wales	1,985	1,744
Education and development programmes	4,067	4,676
International programmes	975	711
Arts and wellbeing programmes	663	284
Holidays and volunteering	135	233
Adult specialist services	6	1
Children's specialist services	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,154</b>	<b>53,891</b>

Income from charitable activities includes grants received for a specific purpose which have been spent entirely on that purpose as follows:

	<b>2023 £000s</b>	<b>2022 £000s</b>
Sense	1,834	1,172
Sense International	980	716
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>1,888</b>



## 2. Investment income

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Bank interest	299	29

## 3. Covid-19 Government Support Grants and Other income

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
<b>Other Income</b>		
Negative goodwill	-	1,174
Miscellaneous income	491	274
	<b>491</b>	<b>1,448</b>
<b>Covid-19 related grant income</b>		
Job Retention Scheme	-	53
Retail Leisure and Hospitality Fund	-	1,413
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	-	361
	-	1,827

Miscellaneous income represents training, advice and consultancy provided to other organisations and charities concerned with disability and rental of office and conference space income at Sense Touch Base Pears.

Retail Leisure and Hospitality Fund income represents the final tranche of monies due following the ending of Covid-19 related government restrictions on the retail sector during the year.

Negative goodwill arises from amortisation of the negative goodwill created on the acquisition of the activities of The Otterhayes Trust on 12 April 2021. The negative goodwill arising on this transaction was written back to income in its entirety in 2022. There is therefore no negative goodwill in 2023.



## 4. Expenditure

ACTIVITY	Direct Costs	Apportioned Support Costs	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Fundraising	5,322	258	<b>5,580</b>	4,858
Trading	13,874	43	<b>13,917</b>	11,796
TouchBase Pears	1,029	4	<b>1,033</b>	1,027
Care and Support Midlands	13,680	1,205	<b>14,885</b>	13,243
Care and Support East	10,691	1,098	<b>11,789</b>	11,025
Care and Support South	13,092	1,361	<b>14,453</b>	12,362
Care and Support North	8,827	970	<b>9,797</b>	9,088
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,007	332	<b>3,339</b>	3,014
Care and Support Wales	2,071	218	<b>2,289</b>	1,978
Education and development programmes	2,416	533	<b>2,949</b>	2,394
International programmes	2,644	165	<b>2,809</b>	2,349
Arts and wellbeing programmes	1,060	76	<b>1,136</b>	703
Holidays and volunteering	1,397	117	<b>1,514</b>	1,086
Adult specialist services	627	75	<b>702</b>	638
Children's specialist services	924	96	<b>1,020</b>	673
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,579	136	<b>1,715</b>	1,405
Quality assurance and development	517	53	<b>570</b>	475
Other	748	-	<b>748</b>	102
	<b>83,505</b>	<b>6,740</b>	<b>90,245</b>	78,216



## 4. Expenditure (continued)

### Analysis of apportioned support costs

Activity	Facilities £000s	Management £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Governance £000s	Comms £000s	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Fundraising	20	16	90	73	1	57	257	237
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43	43
TouchBase	-	-	2	1	-	1	4	-
Care and Support Midlands	92	73	423	343	8	266	1,205	1,118
Care and Support East	84	67	386	312	7	243	1,099	1,090
Care and Support South	104	83	478	387	9	300	1,361	1,221
Care and Support North	74	59	340	276	7	214	970	932
Care and Support Northern Ireland	25	20	117	95	2	73	332	307
Care and Support Wales	17	13	77	62	1	48	218	195
Education programmes	41	32	187	151	4	118	533	447
International programmes	-	136	-	-	29	-	165	171
Arts and wellbeing programmes	6	5	26	21	1	16	75	60
Holidays and volunteering	9	7	41	33	1	26	117	90
Adult specialist services	6	5	26	21	1	16	75	72
Children's specialist services	7	6	34	27	1	21	96	69
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	10	8	48	39	1	30	136	119
Quality assurance and development	4	3	19	15	1	12	54	48
	<b>499</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>6,740</b>	<b>6,219</b>

## 5. Gains on sale of tangible fixed assets and investments

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	52	117

## 6. Settlement of defined benefit pension scheme

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Remeasurement of defined benefit pension scheme on cessation	(2,633)	-
Administration costs defined benefit pension scheme	(42)	-
Total	(2,675)	-



Effective 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the deficit funding agreement in place between Sense and the LGPS regarding the defined benefit pension scheme expired as a result of a cessation valuation producing a surplus on the scheme.

The surplus of £8.364 million was paid to Sense (shown in actuarial gain on pension scheme in the SOFA above). The above charge of £2,633k is the accounting adjustment required to reconcile the cessation valuation surplus to the actuarial valuation surplus, which was higher.

The actuarial valuation surplus along with the write off of the balance sheet provision of £869k (2022: £10,698k) are all included in the actuarial gain on the SOFA. Please see note 10 for more detail.

## 7. Net movements in funds

The net movement in funds is stated after charging/ (crediting):

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Audit fee – Group	117	74
Audit fee – Subsidiaries	8	7
Auditors – non audit fees	15	42
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	2,958	2,720
Amortisation of negative goodwill	-	(1,173)
Operating lease rentals	4,539	4,257
Interest payable on bank loans	236	269

## 8. Employee remuneration

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	54,482	47,635
Social security costs	3,991	3,305
Pension costs - defined contribution schemes	2,257	1,866
Pension costs - defined benefit scheme (see note 10)	494	961
	<b>61,224</b>	<b>53,767</b>

The average monthly number of employees – excluding volunteers – was 2,485 (2022: 2,557).

## 8. Employee remuneration cont'd



Employees earning over £60,000 fell into the following bandings:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
£60,000 - £70,000	14	10
£70,000 - £80,000	4	-
£80,000 - £90,000	1	1
£90,000 - £100,000	1	2
£100,000 - £110,000	3	-
£140,000 - £150,000	-	1
£150,000 - £160,000	1	-

Pension contributions for these employees were as follows:

	2023 £000s	No.	2022 £000s	No.
Defined contribution schemes	54	11	59	14

The aggregate remuneration of the 12 key management personnel (2022: 12) listed in the Trustees' Report, was £745,536 (2022: £726,005) before pension contributions of £39,336 (2022: £34,823).

## 9. Remuneration of members of Council

No Trustees received any remuneration during the year (2022: £nil).

Eight Trustees (2022: two) were reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and duties directly related to their duties as Trustees. Costs reimbursed were £1,465 (2022: £126).

## 10. Pensions

The Group provides defined contribution pension schemes for current employees.

In addition, the Group has ten employees who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The TPS is a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. Since the Group is unable to identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme, contributions to the TPS are accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

The Group historically participated in the Local Pensions Partnerships (LPP), formerly London Pension Fund Authority (LPFA), a scheme which provides benefits based on final pensionable pay in respect of employees' past service. The assets of the scheme were held separately from those of the participating employers and were mainly invested in equity investments and Government Securities. The most recent triennial actuarial valuation of the LPP was as at 31 March 2022.

On 3 August 2018, Sense England (the Employer) and the LPFA entered a Funding Agreement (the Agreement) for Sense England's continued participation within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) following the cessation of their active members, effective from 12 November 2014.

In November 2022 Sense obtained a funding update report as at 30 September 2022. This report showed a surplus on the Fund of £8.634 million under the minimum risk cessation basis, and the actuary calculated that this was an appropriate sum to be repaid to Sense. Under the terms of the Deficit Funding Agreement, this valuation triggered expiry of the Agreement and any obligation to the Fund. Accordingly, the balance sheet provision of £869k has been removed from the balance sheet.

An actuarial valuation was also obtained at the same date as the cessation valuation as required by FRS 102. This valuation calculated a larger surplus than the cessation valuation. The reconciliation between the two valuations is charged to the SOFA.



## 10. Pensions cont'd

**Pension liabilities (as at 30 September 2022) measured in accordance with FRS 102 were:**

	At 30 September 2022 and 31 March 2023	At 31 March 2022
	£'000	£'000
<b>LPP scheme</b>		
Market value of assets	48,348	51,114
Present value of liabilities	(36,994)	(51,863)
LPP scheme - net deficit/surplus	11,354	(749)
Present value of an unfunded pension obligation	(87)	(120)
*Settlement of deficit on cessation basis	(2,633)	-
**Refund of scheme surplus	(8,634)	-
<b>Net pension fund liability recognised</b>	-	(869)

\*Difference between actuarial valuation and cessation valuation charged to SOFA

\*\*Cessation valuation surplus returned to Sense

### Financial assumptions

The principal assumptions used to calculate LPP scheme liabilities were as follows:

	At 30 Sep 2022 % pa
Rate of inflation – CPI	3.2
Discount rate	5.4

Demographic assumptions from age 65 were as follows:

	30 Sept 2022 Years
Retiring today	
- Men	21.2
- Women	23.2
Retiring in 20 years	
- Men	21.9
- Women	25.0



## 10. Pensions cont'd

The post-retirement mortality assumptions were based on:

- Sep 2022: The post-retirement mortality tables are constructed based on Club Vita analysis completed for the 2022 triennial valuation. These base tables are then projected using the CMI\_2021 Model allowing for a long-term rate of improvement of 1.25% p.a.

### Reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities

	At 30 September 2022 and 31 March 2023	At 31 March 2022
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>51,983</b>	54,271
Interest cost	667	1,072
Benefits paid	(729)	(1,293)
Experience loss on defined benefit obligation	3,653	158
Change in financial assumptions	(17,298)	(2,218)
Change in demographic assumptions	(1,188)	-
Unfunded pension payments	(7)	(7)
Settlement of scheme liabilities on cessation	(37,081)	-
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>-</b>	51,983

### Reconciliation of fair value of scheme assets

	At 30 September 2022 and 31 March 2023	At 31 March 2022
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>51,114</b>	44,237
Interest on assets	659	881
Return on assets (below)/in excess of assumed interest	(3,157)	6,386
Administration expenses	(33)	(58)
Contributions by the employer	501	968
Benefits paid	(736)	(1,300)
Refund of scheme surplus	(8,634)	-
Elimination of fund balances on cessation	(39,714)	-
<b>Closing fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>-</b>	51,114



## 10. Pensions cont'd

The following components of the pensions charge have been recognised as operating costs in the statement of financial activities:

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Net interest	8	191
Administration expenses	33	58
Refund of scheme surplus	2,633	-
<b>Total cost / (income)</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>249</b>

### Re-measurements in other comprehensive income

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Return on fund assets in excess of assumed interest	(3,157)	6,386
Changes in financial assumptions	17,298	2,218
Change in demographic assumptions	1,188	-
Experience (loss) on defined benefit obligation	(3,653)	(158)
Deficit reduction payment made	-	7
<b>Total actuarial gain recognised</b>	<b>11,676</b>	<b>8,453</b>

## 11. Tangible assets

	Freehold property	Long leasehold improvements	Short leasehold improvements	Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Motor vehicles	Total
Group cost	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
At 1 April 2022	26,332	3,843	3,934	18,858	3,492	56,459
Additions	874	562	256	3,162	95	4,949
Disposals	-	-	(104)	-	(115)	(219)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>27,206</b>	<b>4,405</b>	<b>4,086</b>	<b>22,020</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>61,189</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2022	4,295	865	2,199	14,766	2,893	25,018
Charge for the year	489	68	179	1,749	114	2,599
Disposals	-	-	(104)	(32)	(220)	(356)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>4,784</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>16,483</b>	<b>2,787</b>	<b>27,261</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>22,422</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>5,537</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>33,928</b>
At 31 March 2022	22,037	2,978	1,735	4,092	599	31,442



## 11. Tangible assets cont'd

Company	Freehold property	Long leasehold improvements	Short leasehold improvements	Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Motor vehicles	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2022	26,332	3,843	3,934	18,854	3,423	56,386
Additions	874	562	256	3,160	95	4,947
Disposals	-	-	(104)	-	(115)	(219)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>27,206</b>	<b>4,405</b>	<b>4,086</b>	<b>22,014</b>	<b>3,403</b>	<b>61,114</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2022	4,295	865	2,199	14,763	2,866	24,988
Charge for the year	489	68	179	1,748	99	2,583
Disposals	-	-	(104)	(32)	(220)	(356)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>4,784</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>16,479</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>27,215</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>22,422</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>5,535</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>33,899</b>
At 31 March 2022	22,037	2,978	1,735	4,091	557	31,399

## 12. Fixed asset investments

Company	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Holding in Helping Sense Limited	30	30

The company owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of Helping Sense Limited, which is incorporated in England and Wales, and exists to raise funds for the company. There is no readily available market value for the company and accordingly it is accounted for at cost. The Trustees believe that the carrying value of the investment is supported by the underlying net assets (note 27).



## 13. Debtors

<b>Group</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	4,687	4,393
Accrued income	1,970	1,626
Prepayments	2,534	1,886
Taxation recoverable	406	306
Other debtors	828	607
	<b>10,425</b>	<b>8,818</b>

<b>Company</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Trade debtors	4,687	4,394
Accrued income	1,539	1,444
Prepayments	2,525	1,875
Amounts owed by group undertakings	109	-
Taxation recoverable	406	306
Other debtors	794	493
	<b>10,060</b>	<b>8,512</b>

Trade debtors are shown net of bad and doubtful net provisions of £124,611 (2022: £150,155)

## 14. Current asset investments

<b>Group and Company</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bank deposits	9,000	4,000

## 15. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bank loans	-	319
Trade creditors	2,875	2,390
Taxation and social security	963	863
Deferred income	880	1,058
Accruals and other creditors	4,207	4,130
	<b>8,925</b>	<b>8,760</b>



## 15. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year) cont'd

Company	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Bank loans	-	319
Trade creditors	2,871	2,390
Amounts owed to group undertakings	-	89
Taxation and social security	963	863
Deferred income	879	1,058
Accruals and other creditors	4,085	4,036
	<b>8,798</b>	<b>8,755</b>

## 16. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)

Group	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Bank loan	-	5,333
Other creditors	32	32
	<b>32</b>	<b>5,365</b>

Company	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Bank loan	-	5,333

The bank loan, which funded the construction of TouchBase Pears was unsecured and repayable in instalments over 16 years to 2035. Interest was fixed on the first £7 million drawdown at 4.17% for the first eight years with the remaining amount drawn on a variable interest based on a margin of 2% above SONIA. During the year, Sense repaid the loan.

Repayments fall due as follows:

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Within one year	-	319
Second to fifth year	-	2,126
After five years	-	3,207
	-	<b>5,652</b>



## 17. Movement of funds

Group	Balance at	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31
	1 April 2022				March 2023
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	31,552	77,614	72,071	2,041	39,136
Designated funds	11,097	-	937	(1,660)	8,500
Pension (note 10)	(869)	-	-	869	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>41,780</b>	<b>77,614</b>	<b>73,008</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>47,636</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	8	22	10	-	20
Arts Council: Dance at Sense	-	78	78	-	-
Big Lottery Fund Grant	47	100	105	-	42
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	51	7	-	-	58
Childrens Services	-	94	-	(94)	-
Childrens Services: North	-	21	-	(21)	-
Childrens Services: South East	58	31	3	(85)	1
Childrens Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	-	34
Community Connections	106	-	1	-	105
Cornwall GOT Project	38	15	21	-	32
Denbigh Hub	3	18	-	-	21
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	-	195	-	(195)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	-	46	-	(30)	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	15	83	15	(1)	82
GOT Group Warwickshire	28	-	2	-	26
Grafton Street Donations	36	10	-	-	46
Hadley Centre (Operations)	25	40	-	-	65
Holidays Fund	68	34	-	-	102
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Loughborough Hub Capital	200	310	25	(485)	-
Loughborough Hub Revenue	50	(50)	-	-	-
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	7	-	-	114
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	25	4	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	96	143	144	-	95
Northern Ireland Outreach Worker	20	-	-	(20)	-
Northern Ireland Special Donations	165	32	16	-	181
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	-	-	40
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	-	195	212	17	-



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2023
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	16	6	-	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	30	1	3	-	28
Northern Ireland Specialist Services	31	-	-	(31)	-
Sport England - Active Together	-	537	403	(30)	104
Stables and riding	9	34	-	-	43
TBP CSS Studio Development	29	54	-	(82)	1
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	(26)	-
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TouchBase South East	30	20	-	-	50
Virtual Buddying	-	137	149	12	-
Volunteering: London Transitions	-	35	1	-	34
Warren Farm Rd	2	200	-	-	202
Woodside - Capital	43	-	-	-	43
Woodside - Operations	64	3	7	-	60
Andlaw House	10	-	-	-	10
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	50	-	50	-	-
CSS Cymru Fund	26	157	3	(30)	150
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
The Devon Group Fund	33	4	3	-	34
Other Sense	521	29	287	(126)	137
Active Citizens Romania	-	64	37	-	27
NLCF Tanzania Adults vocational 2019-2022	38	-	38	-	-
CareTech Foundation EI TZ 3Y 22-25	-	34	34	-	-
Hollyhock Foundation EI TZ EI 3Y 22-25	-	41	21	-	20
Comic Relief Uganda 2020	81	135	105	-	111
Commonwealth Foundation Kenya	-	30	19	-	11
UK Aid Match Bangladesh	63	-	63	-	-
FCDO UK Aid Match Kenya (Early Intervention)	-	129	129	-	-
UK Aid Direct Kenya Co-Funding	9	25	32	-	2
FCDO Disability in Development Bangladesh Livelihoods	(1)	51	50	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Kenya Innovation Education	(2)	34	32	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Kenya	-	93	92	-	1



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

Group	Balance at 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2023
FCDO Disability in Development Tanzania	(2)	210	208	-	-
FCDO Disability in Development Nepal	-	94	93	-	1
FCDO Disability in Development Bangladesh Education	-	114	114	-	-
Guernsey Bangladesh Education	-	23	9	-	14
Jersey Overseas Aid Nepal	37	33	70	-	-
The Batchworth Trust (Nepal)	24	-	24	-	-
Romania in Country	138	28	31	-	135
KBTA - Uganda	-	23	20	-	3
Lavelle	34	-	34	-	-
UN Women (Uganda)	7	33	40	-	-
Uganda iHelp Project	4	107	60	-	51
Nepal Base Fund	-	23	23	-	-
UK Aid Match - Bangladesh	43	(48)	(6)	-	1
Nelumbo Foundation - Education	224	173	398	-	(1)
Thomas Cook Children's Charity (South Goa)	31	-	22	-	9
UK Aid Match Kenya 2020	87	81	83	-	85
Uganda Nelumbo Foundation project	30	-	30	-	-
Peru LACT ED Feb 2021-Jan 2024	28	49	31	-	46
Directors Week	-	31	31	-	-
Kenya Holding Fund	-	77	77	-	-
Tanzania Holding Fund	1	120	121	-	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	210	210	-	-
Bangladesh Holding Fund	-	5	5	-	-
Peru Holding Fund	-	35	35	-	-
Other Sense International	37	51	93	-	(5)
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>4,784</b>	<b>4,046</b>	<b>(1,250)</b>	<b>2,773</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	360	-	(9)	-	351
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>45,425</b>	<b>82,398</b>	<b>77,063</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,760</b>



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

Company	Balance at 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2023
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension	31,183	76,630	71,236	2,041	38,618
Designated funds	11,097	-	937	(1,660)	8,500
Pension (note 10)	(869)	-	-	869	-
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>41,411</b>	<b>76,630</b>	<b>72,173</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>47,118</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts & Wellbeing: Co-Op Inclusive Dance	8	22	10	-	20
Arts Council: Dance at Sense	-	78	78	-	-
Big Lottery Fund Grant	47	100	105	-	42
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	51	7	-	-	58
Childrens Services	-	94	-	(94)	-
Childrens Services: North	-	21	-	(21)	-
Childrens Services: South East	58	31	3	(85)	1
Childrens Services: Wolverhampton	34	-	-	-	34
Community Connections	106	-	1	-	105
Cornwall GOT Project	38	15	21	-	32
Denbigh Hub	3	18	-	-	21
DoH Health & Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	-	195	-	(195)	-
EFA Capital Minor Works	-	46	-	(30)	16
Employment and Benefits Staff	15	83	15	(1)	82
GOT Group Warwickshire	28	-	2	-	26
Grafton Street Donations	36	10	-	-	46
Hadley Centre (Operations)	25	40	-	-	65
Holidays Fund	68	34	-	-	102
Lottery Guide Dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Loughborough Hub Capital	200	310	25	(485)	-
Loughborough Hub Revenue	50	(50)	-	-	-
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	7	-	-	114
Northern Ireland Mallusk Nursery	25	4	-	-	29
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	96	143	144	-	95
Northern Ireland Outreach Worker	20	-	-	(20)	-
Northern Ireland Special Donations	165	32	16	-	181
North - Yorkshire Donations	40	-	-	-	40
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	-	195	212	17	-



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

Company	Balance at 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2023
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
Sense Coleridge Road – Student Welfare Fund	16	6	-	-	22
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	30	1	3	-	28
Northern Ireland Specialist Services	31	-	-	(31)	-
Sport England - Active Together	-	537	403	(30)	104
Stables and riding	9	34	-	-	43
TBP CSS Studio Development	29	54	-	(82)	1
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	(26)	-
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	26	-	-	-	26
TBSE, Hyde Close, Barnet	30	20	-	-	50
Virtual Buddying	-	137	149	12	-
Volunteering: London Transitions	-	35	1	-	34
Warren Farm Rd	2	200	-	-	202
Woodside - Capital	43	-	-	-	43
Woodside - Operations	64	3	7	-	60
Andlaw House	10	-	-	-	10
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	50	-	50	-	-
CSS Cymru Fund	26	157	3	(30)	150
North Wales Donations	35	-	-	-	35
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
The Devon Group Fund	33	4	3	-	34
Other	518	346	186	(126)	552
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>2,993</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>(1,250)</b>	<b>2,677</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	360	-	(9)	-	351
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>44,142</b>	<b>79,623</b>	<b>73,619</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,146</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £20,000. 'Other funds'; are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £20,000.



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

### Unrestricted funds

#### General fund

This represents the accumulated reserves of the charity that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees.

#### Designated funds

Designated funds are £8.5m (2022: £11.1 million) and include £3.0 million for the maintenance and improvement of the Group's residential accommodation and £0.5 million for three years of contributions to Sense International.

Various future strategic plans will be funded from reserves. Trustees have therefore designated £5.0 million for the following projects:

- £1.5 million for investment in the current financial year on innovation projects,
- £1.5 million for investment in energy efficiency improvements centred on our buildings,
- £1.0 million for digital development
- £1.0 million to further progress the Hubs development programme.

#### Pensions

See note 10 for the movement during the year.

### Restricted funds

Sense is reliant on the support of individuals, corporations, trusts, other charities and state bodies in order to deliver our activities. Monies that are received for an express purpose are restricted to that purpose.

The principal restricted funds are considered to be:

#### Sport England

A three-year project to build on our foundations of supporting people with complex disabilities to get active.



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

### **Childrens' services**

Money donated to support Children & Young People who are Deafblind/multi-sensory impaired.

### **Northern Ireland day centre**

Commissioned day service opportunities for adults with complex needs.

### **Northern Ireland special donations**

An accumulation of donations / fundraised funds raised locally for services in Northern Ireland.

### **Holidays**

Donations and fundraised income to support accessible holidays for people with complex disabilities.

### **Warren Farm Road**

A legacy donation restricted to be used against costs at the Warren Farm Road Care Home.

### **Comic Relief Uganda**

This fund comprises the unspent balance at 31 March 2023 of a grant from Comic Relief to Sense International Uganda for the Holistic Early Child Development (ECD) for Children with Complex Disabilities in Uganda project.

### **The Romania in-country income fund**

This fund comprises funds that are raised by Sense International Romania for use in Romania.



## 17. Movement of funds cont'd

### Endowment funds

These are properties given to the charity for its use. The movement on the fund represents the depreciation charge in the year.

### Transfers between funds

Other transfers between funds represent either transfers from unrestricted funds to cover shortfalls of restricted funds or transfers from restricted funds to cover related expenditure paid by unrestricted monies.

## 18. Analysis of net assets between fund balances

Group	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Tangible fixed assets	33,577	-	-	351	33,928
Net current assets	5,591	8,500	2,773	-	16,864
Long-term liabilities	(32)	-	-	-	(32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,136</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>50,760</b>
Company	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Tangible fixed assets	33,548	-	-	351	33,899
Fixed asset Investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	5,040	8,500	2,677	-	16,217
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,618</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>2,677</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>50,146</b>

## 19. Capital commitments

At 31 March the Group had capital commitments of £45,175 (2022: £364,900).



## 20. Contingent liabilities

Sense, Sense International and Helping Sense Limited are members of a group VAT registration. Under the Value Added Tax Act 1983, all members of a VAT group are jointly and severally liable for any tax due during the period of their membership.

As disclosed in note 27 two of the Company's subsidiaries, Helping Sense Limited and Sense4Enterprise Limited, have taken advantage of the exemption available under Section 479 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the requirement for audit. As a condition of the exemption, the Company has guaranteed the year-end liabilities of the relevant subsidiaries until they are settled in full. The liabilities of one of the subsidiaries (Sense4Enterprise Limited) at the year-end were £126,736 (2022: £121,092). The Trustees are satisfied that this does not impact on the going concern position of the Group and believe that this is an accurate and robust guarantee. The other subsidiary (Helping Sense Limited) had assets of £30,000 (2022: £217,402) at 31 March.

## 21. Operating lease commitments

Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

Group and Company	2023		2022	
	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s
Operating leases which expire:				
Within one year	4,378	-	2,760	-
In two to five years	12,640	-	8,680	-
After five years	9,888	-	6,574	-
	<b>26,906</b>	-	18,014	-



## 22. Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Net income before pension revaluations	(3,715)	4,422
Defined benefit pension scheme deficit reduction payments	(452)	(712)
Investment income received	(299)	(29)
Interest paid	236	269
Funding break gain	(233)	-
Depreciation	2,958	2,720
Amortisation of negative goodwill	-	(1,173)
Profit on sale of fixed assets	(201)	(117)
Increase in stock	(246)	(75)
Increase/(decrease) in debtors	(1,607)	389
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	165	(23)
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>(3,394)</b>	<b>5,671</b>

## 23. Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year	(5,041)	122
Bank loan interest repayments	319	2,690
Repayment of bank loan	5,333	-
<b>Changes generated from cash flows</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>2,812</b>
Net cash at start of year	14,056	11,244
<b>Net cash at end of year</b>	<b>14,667</b>	<b>14,056</b>

## 24. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2022	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31 March 2023
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cash at bank and in hand	15,708	(10,041)	-	5,667
Current asset investments	4,000	5,000	-	9,000
Debt due within one year	(319)	319	-	-
Debt due after one year	(5,333)	5,333	-	-
	<b>14,056</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,667</b>

## 25. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	5,667	15,708
Current asset investments	9,000	4,000
	<b>14,667</b>	<b>19,708</b>



## 26. Related party transactions

The Group provides services to children or family members of some Trustees and Board members of the charity. These services are provided as part of the contracts agreed with funding authorities on the same commercial terms as with any other service user.

Balances with subsidiaries are disclosed below:

	31 March 2023 Debtor/(Creditor) £	31 March 2022 Debtor/(Creditor) £
Sense International	199,816	7,807
Helping Sense Limited	(30,000)	(217,402)
Sense4Enterprise Limited	126,736	121,092

## 27. Subsidiary companies

### Sense International

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Income	2,347	2,533
Expenditure	(3,009)	(2,564)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(662)</b>	<b>(31)</b>
Assets	883	1,352
Liabilities	(328)	(135)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>1,217</b>

### Helping Sense Limited

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Turnover	4,966	3,862
Cost of sales	(863)	(622)
Gross profit	4,103	3,240
Operating expenses	(4,103)	(3,052)
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>188</b>
Assets	30	217
Liabilities	-	-
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>217</b>



## 27. Subsidiary companies cont'd

### Sense4Enterprise Limited

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Income	84	74
Expenditure	(89)	(87)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(13)</b>
<hr/>		
Assets	-	-
Liabilities	(126)	(121)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>(126)</b>	<b>(121)</b>



## Other information

### Major supporters of Sense in 2022/23

- Audrey Earle Charitable Trust
- Communication Consortium
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Hollyhock Charitable Foundation
- Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
- Leicestershire SHIRE Communities Fund
- Mabs Mardulyn Charitable Foundation
- Pears Foundation
- Smith Charitable Trust
- Worth Waynflete Foundation (Hubert Lewczuk-Tilley)
- The Basil Samuel Charitable Trust
- The Beatrice Laing Trust
- The Blair Foundation
- The Boshier-Hinton Foundation
- The Estate of Helen Eunice Johnson
- The Eveson Charitable Trust
- The Glen Beg Foundation
- The Hadley Trust
- The Halbard Charitable Trust
- The Lawson Trust
- The Montal Charitable Trust
- The P F Charitable Trust
- The Patrick and Helena Frost Foundation
- The Peacock Charitable Trust



- The Pierrepont Trust
- The Pilkington Charities Fund
- The Princess Anne's Charities Trust
- The Simon Gibson Charitable Trust
- The Thomas J Horne Memorial Trust
- The Ulverscroft Foundation
- The Welland Charitable Trust
- The Wixamtree Trust
- The Wolfson Foundation
- Mr Roger Eaton
- Mr Tim Watts, Pertemps
- GMC Trust
- Severn Trent Community Fund
- Thomas Pocklington Trust
- The Exhilarch's Foundation



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Tel: 0300 330 9250

Email: [facilities@sense.org.uk](mailto:facilities@sense.org.uk)

Websites: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

<https://www.senseinternational.org.uk>

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Tel: 0300 330 9256

Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

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County Antrim, BT36 4RU

Tel/text: 028 9083 3430

Email: [nienquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:nienquiries@sense.org.uk)

### Sense Cymru

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Testud/text: 0300 330 9282

Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)



**Sense:** Registered number 1825301

**Registered charity number** 289868

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**SENSE, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 289868

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# Accounts

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# **Sense Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022**

## **Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association:**

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association (Sense), Sense International and Helping Sense Limited

Sense: Registered number 1825301

Registered charity number 289868

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## Message from our President

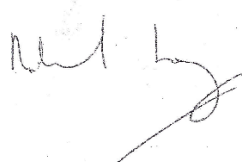
The last three years have been challenging for the whole country as we dealt with the far-reaching effects of the pandemic and the people that Sense supports have been impacted more than most.

I have total and complete admiration for the people working for Sense, supporting children and adults in their family homes, and in the community. Through lockdowns and social distancing measures, they ensured that support still reached those that needed it most. Through the easing of restrictions, they helped people navigate their way back to increased 'normality' and now, as we feel the knock-on effects, they continue to work just as hard to ensure that no one is left out.

These last years, more than ever, have demonstrated that the strength of Sense's approach is its ability to adapt to change. Innovation is our hallmark, and we have already seen huge progress in our transformative new strategy to deliver vital support to more people than ever before. With the establishment of a new early intervention service, a national buddying service, the launch of a new website, and great advancements in the development of new hubs in Denbigh and Loughborough, we are making strides in our ability to support more people, using innovative, yet proven models.

I was fortunate enough to be part of celebrating these achievements at the Sense Commonwealth dinner, hosted by our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, at Sense TouchBase Pears, in Birmingham. It was a fantastic evening, full of sports, performance and sensory exploration – a testimony to the imaginative ways of working that Sense lives and breathes. One month later, it couldn't have been more fitting than to see the building transformed into an accessible venue for the Commonwealth Games, which delivered its most inclusive programme ever.

I would like to thank our loyal and dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters for everything they have done to help us achieve so much this year.



The Lord Levy  
President

## Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

As we look back at our performance over the last year, it brings into sharp focus how much operating in uncertainty has become the new norm for us. We've moved from the sudden shock of the pandemic to post-Covid recovery into a cost-of-living crisis.

This is a common theme across all charities, and across the whole country. In particular, the current challenges of recruiting staff are present across sectors, and nationwide.

Social care is more fragile than ever. Yet, it is vital to supporting the most vulnerable members of our society. That's why we're working hard to make the case to government for increased investment in social care and its workforce, as we face possibly our most challenging time yet.

We are also acutely aware that the cost-of-living crisis emerging across the country doesn't affect people equally. At a time where we've found that rising costs are pushing more than half of disabled households into debt, disabled people and their families are paying the highest cost, and need our support more than ever. In response, we have introduced our cost-of-living fund for those disproportionately affected by the financial situation. We're proud to have brought about this support - a first for the sector - but more is needed, in particular by way of long-term financial support from government.

Throughout all the uncertainties, challenges and changes of the last number of years, one thing that has remained constant is the resilience and determination of our team at Sense. The spirit of the Sense family has allowed us to continue to provide the high-quality care and support that children and adults with complex disabilities need. The achievements in this report are theirs, and we thank them for their dedication and hard work.



Justin Molloy  
Chair of Sense



Richard Kramer  
Chief Executive of Sense and Sense International

## Report of the Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (including the strategic report)

### Who we are: our mission and vision

#### Who we are

Sense is a national disability charity that supports children and adults who are deafblind or have complex disabilities to communicate, experience the world, and fulfil their potential. We also have an international arm, Sense International, which works in eight countries round the world.

Sense offers personalised support in our residential and supported living services; in the community and across our centres, holidays and short breaks; and provides opportunities for children and adults to take part in arts and sport activities across the country.

We are here for everyone who needs us, for as long as they need us, providing early intervention for children, helping young people access education, and supporting the transition into adulthood and beyond. As well as providing practical support, we also offer information to families and we campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

We work with a range of partners to deliver our services, including local authorities, housing associations, healthcare professionals, schools, and art and sport organisations.

Some of our services are funded by Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), whilst others, such as our specialist work with children and young people, are entirely dependent on charitable fundraising and income from trading through our 115 shops.

All of our different services are tailored to the needs of each individual.

#### Our mission

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication, so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.

## **What we believe**

Our vision is of a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

## **What we do**

We provide expert support that's tailored to the individual needs of each person who has complex disabilities or is deafblind. That might be through our centres, holidays and short breaks, or in people's homes. In addition to practical support, we also offer information to families, and campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

## **Who we support**

We are here for every person living with complex disabilities that make it a challenge to communicate, access information and take part in life.

We are specialists in providing the individual, tailored support people need to lead a fulfilling life.

## **What we mean by complex disabilities**

People with complex disabilities – or complex needs – tend to have two or more disabilities and experience unique barriers in daily life. This can make it harder to develop new skills, communicate and live independently.

## **How we support**

We know that, with the right support, it is possible for every person to make sense of their world and the world around them, no matter how complex their disabilities.

We help people to communicate and express themselves – be it through speech or sign, touch or movement, gesture or sound, art or dance.

For over 65 years, Sense has developed an unrivalled depth of knowledge, skill and expertise to help people overcome the barriers to communication. We help people develop the skills to enjoy everyday things like having a conversation, enjoying friendships and living independently.

We offer personalised and flexible services that are built around the specific needs of each individual. That means we support people in their home and in the community, in their education and transition to adulthood, and through our holidays, arts, sports and wellbeing programmes.

We also offer practical support to families, including information, advice, short breaks and family events.

We campaign to change laws and government policies where necessary, to ensure that everyone, no matter how complex their disabilities, can communicate, access information, and take part in life.

## A summary of our year in numbers

### Our reach in numbers

Our many different services reached more than **28,000** people. This means we supported double the number of children and adults with complex disabilities, parents, carers and siblings, compared to last year.

Media coverage grew by **14%** year-on-year, as we raise the profile of our work and give voice to the people we support.

Almost **365,500** people visited our relaunched website, with its expanded range of information, advice and events for people with complex disabilities.

We raised **£12,951,000** in donations for our work, thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

### Our services in numbers

Nearly **6,000** people engaged with our pioneering services designed to tackle loneliness and social isolation. Including dedicated support for siblings and young carers of children with complex disabilities, we were able to connect all these people with peers and volunteer buddies.

We supported almost **3,500** children through our specialist and operational services, and launched our new Early Intervention and Play service. This meant we reached **500** more children, compared to last year.

Our information and advice line supported people with **5,224** enquiries. An increase of over **70%, compared to last year.**

Nearly **9,000** people accessed our sports and physical activity programme. This was an increase of over **170%**, thanks, in part, to expansion of our online support.

More than **2,000** people benefited from our inclusive art and wellbeing activities.

In partnership with local and education authorities, we supported **335** people last year in our accommodation services, and **542** people accessing day and community services through our **10** Sense Centres. Our **9** specialist college sites worked with **322** young people and adults.

**95%** of our services are judged by CQC to be good or outstanding.

### Our influence in numbers

**42,000** signed our petition to the government to put disabled people at the heart of the Covid-19 inquiry.

Our 'Left Out of Life' campaign saw **8,000** people pledging their commitment to everyday actions that will help make life more inclusive.

We increased the impact of our work to engage with MPs and the Lords. Sense was mentioned **21** times in parliament and we met with **36** parliamentarians.

Our new annual research programme saw over **1,500** people with complex disabilities share their lived experiences on a range of key topics.

Through ground-breaking, first-of-its-kind research, we established there are **1.6 million** people living with complex disabilities in the UK.

## Our strategic outcomes: achievements and plans

Imagine a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out of life. Our strategy – No One Left Out of Life – has four strategic outcomes. Refreshed for 2021-26, they outline how we aim to support ten times more people living with complex disabilities by 2026. That's 50,000 people over 5 years.

These are some of the achievements and plans that further our mission and take us towards delivering on that goal.

### Outcome 1: children and families get the best possible start

Being a parent or carer of a child who is deafblind or with complex disabilities can be challenging. But, the right support, at the right time, can make all the difference in a child's development.

#### Key achievements

In 2021/22, we supported nearly 3,500 children through our specialist and operational services, including nearly 500 new families that we hadn't had contact with before. During the pandemic, we had to deliver many of our services online due to social distancing measures. In 2021, we were very pleased to be able to resume in-person activities and events. As well as this, we've also continued to offer a weekly timetable of online activities for families that can't access in-person session, which have proven to be very popular.

We continued to provide awareness training on multi-sensory impairment and deafblindness to other agencies and professionals, with nearly 400 professionals accessing this training in 2021/22. And, our information and advice line received 5,224 enquiries last year. This was over a 70% increase on the enquiries we helped with in the previous year.

We also developed a number of new programmes for children and families last year:

- Navigating the MSI World came in response to feedback from families. We delivered 80 sessions – providing information and advice to parents and carers on a whole range of topics, including communication, mindfulness and wellbeing, and sleep, as well as

offering an opportunity for parents and carers to connect with others in a safe and supportive environment.

- Little Dragons is our new virtual pre-school group, which families from across Wales can attend.
- We launched our Early Intervention and Play service in Birmingham at the end of 2021. This is a service supporting the families of 0–9-year-olds to communicate and play with their child with complex disabilities. The service will be extended to Loughborough in 2022, before being rolled out nationally.

### **Plans for 2022/23**

During the coming year, we plan to deliver on refreshed objectives in support of children and families getting the best possible start:

- We will test and launch innovative new services, including an early intervention service to support children with complex disabilities.
- We will ensure sustained or improved outcomes for the people we support, through our quality and safeguarding work.
- We will address capacity and capability gaps to enable digital innovation and service delivery, by exploring digital information, services and products for people with complex disabilities and their families.

### **Outcome 2: adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

We believe that everyone has a right to live a fulfilling life and play an active part in their community, including through equal access to work, education and training.

With the right support, that reflects people's aspirations and needs, we can ensure that no one is left out, or unable to fulfil their potential.

### **Key achievements**

During 2021/22, following the easing of Covid restrictions, we managed the transition back to normal life for the people we support. Our dedicated team took care to ensure that each individual was supported to return to their lifestyle of choice. This included 335 people –

across 67 locations – in our accommodation services, and 542 people using our 10 Sense Centres to access day services.

Our 9 specialist college sites also provided access to educational opportunities and wider support for 322 people, with 146 being funded through education programmes.

We also invested in developing new services, and expanding existing ones, so that we can increase the number of people we support. During the year, we:

- Took on the services of the Otterhayes Trust, a self-contained site in Devon supporting 21 people in a variety of accommodation settings. We worked with our new colleagues and the people living there to improve services, invest in the environment and buildings, and move activities into the community.
- Made significant progress in developing our Sense College Loughborough site as a hub. This will allow us to expand the range and scope of services delivered, including providing support to children and their families, employment support for people with complex disabilities, and arts and sports facilities and programmes. We also plan to develop the site as a digital hub that will be able to reach more people, and have plans to develop hubs in two further locations over the next two years.
- Made advancements with our new site in Denbigh, which will provide much-needed person centred day services to people in North Wales. Following its launch, we also plan to expand the range of services we provide here.
- Worked with commissioners of services – for example Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – to extend our commissioned support to a further 53 adults.

### **Plans for 2022/23**

During the coming year, we plan to deliver on refreshed objectives to support adults to live and learn at every stage of their lives:

- We will continue to develop our hubs programme across the UK. Our two new hubs in Denbigh and Loughborough will be opened, offering a range of vital services and support in these areas.
- We will increase the numbers of adults in our supported living services.

### Outcome 3: individuals are less lonely and more connected in their communities

Almost two thirds of the 14.1 million disabled people living in the UK are chronically lonely. Through this strand of our strategy, we aim to generate new social connections for more than 30,000 people over 5 years.

#### Key achievements

In 2021/22, nearly 6,000 people benefitted from our services designed to tackle loneliness and social isolation by connecting people with their peers and with volunteer buddies. This includes dedicated support for siblings and young carers of children with complex disabilities.

Sense Holidays provide an opportunity to make friends for life. The programme resumed in 2021, after being paused in 2020 due to the pandemic. We provided group residential breaks for 42 children, young people and adults during the year. 181 young people also accessed the day events, residentials and workshops of our Vision England project, which was designed to engage groups of young people with disabilities in conservation and environmental issues.

Over 2,000 people accessed our inclusive arts and wellbeing programme, and we distributed 1,420 arts and wellbeing boxes to people's homes.

In 2021, we resumed in-person sessions for our sports and activity programme, as well as continuing online and telephone activities. Nearly 9,000 people accessed these. We also focused on upskilling others, including sports coaches and social care staff, to enable people with complex disabilities to participate in physical activity. Our sports team delivered workshops to 346 people and developed a network of physical activity champions.

As well as this, new projects introduced in 2020/21 included:

- The launch of our Thrive Festival in London, which gave young people the opportunity to experience a cultural festival and develop friendships. Overall, 126 young people accessed buddying projects across London.

- Our new online arts club. We produced 14 creative videos to engage people with arts activities and they were viewed by 1,103 people.
- Our fully accessible performance space, and music and visual arts studios – at Sense Touchbase Pears in Birmingham – opened in the Summer of 2021.
- Sensory Walks, launched in April 2021, is our partnership with Ordnance Survey and Forestry England to map over 50 sensory walks across the UK.
- Sensory Football, launched in January 2022, shows how football can be delivered for people with complex disabilities in more engaging ways. We developed a toolkit, training and mentoring, and set up regular, local activities nationally.
- As well as delivering our own programme of opportunities for physical activities, we published new research in partnership with ukactive Research Institute and Sport England. The report 'Understanding the physical activity needs of families who have children with complex disabilities' highlights the key recommendations for all sports providers to consider, when delivering accessible activities.

### **Plans for 2022/23**

During the coming year, we plan to deliver on refreshed objectives to ensure individuals are less lonely and more connected in their communities:

- We will increase the numbers of people we reach through our virtual buddying and siblings programmes.
- We will test and launch new services including a dance programme.
- We will continue to improve outcomes for the people we support.
- We will engage and inform the public around the issue of loneliness and disability.

### **Outcome 4: society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action**

For over 65 years, Sense has been standing up for disability rights. We support disabled people and their families to fight for change on a local and national level.

## **Key achievements**

Media coverage of our work grew by 14% year-on-year, as we raise the profile of our work and give voice to the people we support.

Our newly relaunched website also reached almost 365,500 people with its expanded range of information, advice and events for people with complex disabilities.

We campaigned for a public inquiry that put disabled people's experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic at its heart. Over 300,000 people viewed our campaign film and shared it on social media, including celebrities like Stephen Fry. Over 42,000 signed our petition to government. The inquiry will be held in 2022, and we are feeding into its development, to ensure it is accessible and inclusively run.

'MSI teachers', our campaign highlighting the vital role of specialist support in schools for children with multi-sensory impairment, called for greater investment into the recruitment and training of MSI teachers. Over 1,000 supporters signed our letter to the chancellor.

The Sense 'Left Out of Life' campaign continued in 2021/22. Over 8,000 signed our pledge committing to everyday actions that will help make life more inclusive.

1,200 people watched last year's Sense Awards live online, celebrating the achievements of people with complex disabilities, as well as their family members, carers, volunteers and support staff. The awards featured big names, such as comedian Rosie Jones, Channel 4 News TV presenter, Darsha Soni, and social media influencer, Shelby Lynch.

In 2021/22 we increased the impact of our work to engage with MPs and the Lords. Sense was mentioned 21 times in parliament, we were invited to give evidence to the Work and Pensions select committee, and we met with 36 parliamentarians, including ministerial and shadow ministerial teams.

In a major new project for 2021/22, we also established a new annual research programme, which, in its first year, saw over 1,500 people with complex disabilities share their lived experiences on a range of key topics.

We delivered ground-breaking, first-of-its-kind research on the scale of complex disabilities in the UK, identifying how many people are living with complex disabilities in the UK and its nations and regions. The research also includes projections for the future and is now forming the basis of work across the organisation, including service development, campaign planning and fundraising.

### **Plans for 2022/23**

During the coming year, we plan to deliver on refreshed objectives to ensure society is aware of our work and is inspired to take action:

- We will grow our supporter base and reach over 200,000 people.
- We aim to increase the percentage of people that recognise our brand to 37%.
- We will recruit 300 new volunteers to our virtual buddying and siblings programmes.
- We will increase our items of national media coverage to 800.
- We will run two national campaigns, mobilising at least 50,000 people.
- We will substantially increase our fundraising activity to make all our work possible.

### **Sense International: achievements and plans**

Sense International supports children and adults with deafblindness in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. People with deafblindness in these countries struggle to access healthcare, education, vocational training and opportunities to participate in their community.

Sense International had four strategic objectives for 2021/22:

- Ensure quality services.
- Improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness.
- The voice of people with deafblindness is heard.
- Rights are recognised and realised.

Covid-19 continued to affect services in 2021/22, as school closures and limits on face-to-face interactions continued in many places. Despite this, overall, we have delivered on our strategic objectives by adapting and innovating. Moving support and training online, for

example, enabled us to continue to reach families and education or healthcare professionals, despite restrictions.

## Strategic objective 1: ensure quality services

We work to demonstrate the benefits of increasing access to high quality services for people with deafblindness. This includes working with government ministries to encourage learning and sustainability. We work across three themes: screening and early intervention, inclusive education, and vocational skills and livelihoods.

### Screening and early intervention

The sooner any baby with visual or hearing impairment is identified, and given the support they need, the more likely they are to develop to their full potential. We demonstrate to ministries of health how early screening can be used, and the huge difference that early support and therapy can make. We train health workers and enable parents to understand and communicate with their child, as well as to boost their child's progress towards achieving developmental milestones.

**In Kenya**, 20,859 children were screened for complex disabilities by volunteers using the risk factor questionnaire. 62 children were enrolled in early intervention therapeutic services.

### Inclusive education

We work with families, schools, colleges, partner organisations, government institutions and ministries of education, to enable learners with deafblindness to fulfil their potential, by getting the educational support that they need. From training parents and teachers, to providing specialist technology and adapting school facilities, curricula and learning materials, we do what is needed to enable children with deafblindness to learn.

In 2021/22, we developed the Global Deafblindness Resource Centre – [deafblindness.info](https://deafblindness.info) – with accessible materials for those who support people with deafblindness, including parents, caregivers, teachers and NGO workers.

**In Nepal**, 42 teachers in Morang and Rupandehi received training and we also provided online sign language training for staff and parents through schools in Morang and Simli. Schools in Morang have been renovated to include accessible classrooms that children with disabilities can attend. Following our advocacy, we received commitment from governmental officials to support impactful new resource classes for children with deafblindness in Kathmandu, and to provide student stipends.

**In Bangladesh**, 227 children were supported with access to education, with 64 in school (including 29 new enrolments) and others supported through centres or at home.

**In Uganda**, we worked in partnership with the Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa and the Ministry of Education, to support schools with orbit readers (equipment for learners with visual impairment), and to train teachers on their use and maintenance. We also provided training to parents, teachers, school management committees and local leaders from the Eastern region, focusing on issues including play and learning materials for early childhood education centres, management and safeguarding.

### **Vocational training and livelihoods**

Young people with deafblindness want to be as independent as possible. They want to learn vocational skills and earn a living or contribute to the household income. We support them through the different stages of this process, enabling them to join a vocational training centre, become an apprentice, or make a plan and start up their own business. We provide links to advisers and local business support schemes.

**In Tanzania**, 38 young people with complex disabilities were assessed and provided with recommendations on a vocational course placement. We helped to renovate Yombo Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centre, including installation of a computer room. Thanks to advocacy, 18 young people with complex disabilities are also receiving government support, where free accommodation and meals are provided by the training centre. We also worked to gain official authorisation of guidance for tutors on how to adapt the national vocational training curriculum for young people with complex disabilities.

## Strategic objective 2: improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness

Understanding more about the challenges facing people with deafblindness, and the effectiveness of our interventions, is essential to our work. For example, research provides us with valuable evidence which we use to advocate to governments for improvements in their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2021/22, we contributed to the drafting of the second global report on deafblindness, as part of the report research reference group and through providing case studies.

**In Romania**, we partnered with three major universities (The University of Bucharest, Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, the University of Iaşi) to run the national conference 'Education of Children with Deafblindness: Together Again!' The event brought together over 100 participants daily, including teachers, educators, students, psychologists, social workers and other specialists.

## Strategic objective 3: voice of people with deafblindness is heard

People living with deafblindness should be the ones speaking out about the challenges they face and the changes they want to see. We support people with deafblindness to speak out through training, networking and providing opportunities to meet with decision-makers. We also support groups of parents of children with deafblindness. When caregivers cannot speak on behalf of their children, we support them to advocate to governments for social protection, access to services and educational opportunities for their children.

**In Nepal**, a successful national workshop was held for 25 young people with deafblindness, who learned about advocacy work and their rights. A network of parents of children with deafblindness was established in Sindhuli, and 13 young people with deafblindness attended rights-based advocacy and awareness training.

**In Romania**, we supported 13 young people with deafblindness with training in leadership and advocacy, so they can speak about their rights.

## Strategic objective 4: rights are recognised and realised

We advocate for change based on the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other UN Conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We raise awareness among people with deafblindness, their families and communities to increase understanding that everyone has rights to healthcare, education, decent work, social protection, inclusion and participation. We advocate with governments for these rights, pushing for better implementation of the UNCRPD at all levels, so that people with deafblindness can live, learn and thrive.

In 2021/22, we continued in our Covid-19 response, to support people with deafblindness and their families with protective and sanitary equipment and food. In India, we reached over 1,292 families with Covid support and in Bangladesh we supported 242 people.

**In Peru**, a virtual conversation was held by the Peruvian Network of Inclusive Education, on inclusive education and the return to classrooms. Sense Peru's Director presented on the inclusion of students with deafblindness to an audience of over 70 people, including representatives of the Ombudsman's Office and the Ministry of Education. In July 2021, after 10 years of sustained advocacy work by the Sense team, Peru's Ministry of Education approved and published the formal requirements, profile and competencies for the training of interpreter guides for people with deafblindness. It means that institutes of higher education can now offer a degree for interpreter guides, in a huge step for support for people with deafblindness.

**In India**, we made three representations about deafblindness at the Global Disability Summit, held virtually in February 2022. Shrutilata Singh, Sense India's network specialist, and Asha, a young woman with deafblindness, participated in the World Bank-led World Data Forum in Bern, Switzerland. Shruti spoke about the importance of counting people with deafblindness and about the accessibility of the forum itself, which generated a lot of discussion.

## Sense International: plans for 2022/23

In 2021/22 we reviewed and refreshed our strategy. While our vision remains the same, we crystallised our mission and consolidated our values and principles. We agreed to

shape our work under three strategic and five enabling objectives. In 2022/23, we will continue to deliver work on early years, inclusive education, and vocational training and livelihoods, alongside training and knowledge sharing, and advocacy, so that people with deafblindness are included in systems and societies.

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## Quality and safeguarding at Sense

### Quality

We have continued to provide services of the highest quality, as recognised by our regulators. 95% of services registered with the Care Quality Commission have been rated by them as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. We also provided high levels of assurance to our regulators on our response to keeping people safe throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, through their targeted infection prevention and control inspections.

We continued virtual approaches to reviewing the quality, safety and compliance of services during 2021/22. Our independently-chaired quality board received reports of innovation and effective approaches to meeting the challenges presented by the pandemic. These demonstrated how Sense staff had continued to support people during the worst of the pandemic, responding to people's needs, and enabling them to maintain contact with family and friends.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of our provision of the highest quality services. Our Sense User Reference Group is a group of people living with complex disabilities, who provide feedback on Sense services. The group has continued to meet virtually throughout the year, have contributed to our policy work on health and wellbeing, and gave feedback on the development of the new Sense website.

We have also piloted a new approach to the involvement of the people using our services in our quality assurance process. This has included the employment of two disabled people, working as experts by experience, to provide a different perspective to quality audits. We plan to extend this approach in 2022/23.

Our Working Together for Change programme exists to listen to the experiences of the people we support, and to use these experiences to improve and inform our services. The programme has gathered information specifically around health and wellbeing, from 254 people who use Sense services. This information has fed into our policy and research work and into our arts, sports and wellbeing programmes, so that we can design activities together, based on what is important to the people we support. We will be extending Working Together for Change, to our children's services and Sense College in 2022/23.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding has continued to be a priority for Sense and we have developed new policies and resources to ensure safety and prevent abuse arising from the increased provision of online and digital services. Our independently-chaired safeguarding board has continued to meet to review policies and procedures, and to provide assurance on our response to safeguarding concerns. We have continued to monitor levels of training and awareness of safeguarding for our staff and volunteers.

We have also continued to deliver our innovative work on identity, sexuality and relationships. We have provided individualised support, delivered training and developed resources to enable people to have safe and meaningful relationships, and to develop their sense of self and identity. During the summer of 2021, we held a friendships and relationships week, where we provided support on safe personal relationships, and enabled people with shared interests to meet up online.

We reviewed the governance provided by both the quality and safeguarding boards during the year and made changes to improve engagement and communication with the wider organisation on the work of the boards.

## Fundraising

Sense services are funded in two ways. Statutory services, such as our day opportunities, are commissioned and funded by local authorities. But many of our vital services, such as our specialist support for children and young people, are funded by income raised through fundraising.

During 2021/22, as the pandemic continued to be felt across the world, our supporters continued to show amazing generosity and energy in support of our work. We would like to thank every single person that has supported Sense, and given their time, money and voice to our vital work.

People's enormous generosity through this time meant that we raised £12,951,000 for the work of Sense and Sense International. This includes:

- £3,973,000 from 178 supporters who made a special bequest to remember Sense in their will. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and thanks to their loved ones.
- Following a campaign online and on TV, we also received 1,013 new enquiries from people interested in leaving money to Sense in their Will.
- More than 512 groups, companies and individuals engaged with us to raise funds and awareness of Sense's vital work, in local communities across the country.
- Our 'Left Out of Life' supporter appeal raised an amazing £136,000. The appeal asked for donors' continued support to help us build a kinder and more inclusive society for children who are deafblind, and their families. It featured 5-year-old Zach, who is deafblind and has the extremely rare condition, Yunis Varon.
- £205,000 was raised from almost 5,000 new supporters following our new television advert 'Magic Key', featuring 4-year-old Luca and his older brother Zach, who have benefited from the support of our children's specialist support team.
- Individual supporters donated to help fill a box of delights for children we work with at Christmas. The appeal raised £646,000 and gained the support of 11,000 new donors.
- Our new fundraising initiative, Sense Sign School, is raising money and helping people learn British Sign Language. For £10 a month, people receive a set of flash cards, conversation guides and access to teaching videos by Deaf people who use Sense services.
- There was a two-year delay for some, but in October 2021, the London Marathon returned. Over 300 runners took on the challenge of the Marathon and virtual Marathon, raising in excess of £620,000!

- All the trusts, foundations, philanthropists and businesses who worked with us this year continue to play a vital role in our fundraising, and to our work to ensure that no one's left out of life. We're delighted that several partners invested in our plans to bring a network of hubs to new communities across the country, and reach thousands more people by 2026. Other highlights include launching partnerships with Severn Trent and Thames Water, helping them learn more about the needs and aspirations of disabled people, so that their services are more accessible and more reflective of their communities.

We're proud to recognise our partners on pages 97 and 98 of this report. We'd also like to thank everyone who supported Sense, but preferred to remain anonymous.

This continues to be a critical time for Sense and the people we work with, many of whom continue to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. With the effects of a cost-of-living crisis becoming increasingly apparent, we can't express enough gratitude to the people that continue to enable us to be there for the people that need our support.

### **Our commitment to fundraise responsibly**

Maintaining the trust of our supporters is critical – that is why honesty and transparency is at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to follow best practice in fundraising and marketing. We are members of the Institute of Fundraising and registered with the Fundraising Regulator, whose Code of Practice we follow.

We adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements, and ensure that our policies, guidelines and processes are regularly reviewed. We have strict guidelines about fundraising from vulnerable people and we never put pressure on anyone to donate. In 2021/22 Sense worked with four professional fundraisers to support our fundraising. We closely monitor our supplier partners and those that fundraise on our behalf, to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We work extremely hard to ensure supporters and the public have a positive experience of Sense, but we recognise we do not always get it right. You can find our complaints policy

on the Sense website – we take all complaints and concerns seriously and value your feedback.

Over the last year the supporter services team received 42 complaints. We always respond quickly to requests to change the way in which we contact people and ensure that we manage our supporters' personal details in a respectful and secure manner. We also review our data management procedures on a regular basis.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator to ensure that we are transparent, respectful and that we champion best practice and adhere to regulations. During the reporting period, Sense received 72 requests through the Fundraising Preference Service, asking us not to send fundraising requests. No complaints were made to the Fundraising Regulator about Sense during this period.

If you would like to talk to us about fundraising, please contact us on:

[supporterservices@sense.org.uk](mailto:supporterservices@sense.org.uk) or 0300 330 9257.

## Our volunteers

We were supported by more than 1,900 incredible volunteers across 2021/22, who provided vital support in our shops, as well as our services and activities.

**Sense Holidays**, which was paused in 2020 because of the pandemic, returned in 2021 with the help of volunteers. Along with our holidays team, they navigated Covid restrictions to enable us to deliver 12 unforgettable holidays for people with complex disabilities.

**Sense shops** rely on volunteers, who are a vital part of their operations and engagement with local communities. Following the uncertainties that the pandemic brought, we worked to rebuild volunteer teams and have been delighted to see them return to pre-pandemic levels.

**Virtual Buddying** is a valuable way that volunteers can help us tackle loneliness and social isolation. We have continued to develop the role of volunteers in this programme, expanded recruitment and welcomed new volunteers

We're so thankful for the time, energy and commitment our volunteers give to support our work. Volunteers' Week 2021 was a chance for us to demonstrate this, to celebrate our volunteers, and to show them how valued and appreciated they are. We sent each volunteer a small token thank-you gift, held health and wellbeing activities, offered opportunities to learn British Sign Language, and held our first volunteer conference, in celebration of our volunteers. We also shared messages of thanks on our website and on social media.

## Our people

2021/22 was another year when our talented and dedicated workforce rose to every challenge we faced and ensured that our services remained secure and safe for the people we support. Everyone, whether those that were directly involved in looking after the people we support, or those that work in office functions keeping the organisation running efficiently and effectively, played a vital role.

In turn, we supported our employees in the transition back to their workplaces following the disruption of the pandemic, by adapting our working practices and adopting an agile working model where possible.

## How we supported our people

As pandemic restrictions eased, we delivered a mix of classroom-based and online eLearning courses to our people. As our online learning portfolio expanded, we launched an improved digital learning and development hub, including a range of courses and resources to support the whole workforce, on topics ranging from workplace diversity to cyber security. This portal also has many resources to support people with their mental health and wellbeing.

We introduced new ways of working for our workplace coach team, who support on-the-job training. We partnered them with specific areas of the organisation, with the aim of increasing support for managers and employees.

To further support our leaders, we offered new eLearning courses on soft skills to help them manage and engage their teams. We also launched Sense Manager, a self-service

portal within Sense People – our people information management software – to support managers with tools for people management.

Our Sense Plus rewards portal was also introduced. As well as offering discounts and cashback for a range of well-known retailers, this includes a dedicated wellbeing centre with resources to help our people manage their mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

### Recruiting new talent

This year has proved challenging for recruitment nationally and we have noticed increased difficulty in finding the right people. As a response, we have invested in a new team focused on attracting candidates to our job roles. The talent acquisition team use the strength of our brand in digital recruitment marketing, to showcase Sense as an employer of choice.

### Engaging and communicating with our people

This year we worked to ensure we had a steady and consistent flow of communications with colleagues, including greater promotion of our internal and external campaigns, and a focus on wellbeing and engagement.

Our Sense Awards event was hosted online, giving many more employees the opportunity to attend. Our employee forum has also continued to be held online since the pandemic, meaning easier access for employees across the UK to have their say on what's happening within the organisation.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of our continued equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journey, we ran Being an Inclusive Leader webinars, ahead of our first inclusion month in March. This was filled with a wide range of activities for our employees and the people we support, highlighting various dates in the cultural calendar.

We launched new EDI eLearning courses during inclusion month and our newly formed mental wellbeing network was also launched. To celebrate our new transgender and non-

binary inclusion policy, we hosted a Sense Gig to raise awareness, supported by manager briefings afterwards.

Our EDI board met regularly over the year to input into our EDI plans and activities, chaired by our EDI lead and the Chief Executive. Our existing employee networks – the disability network, the ethnic diversity network and the LGBTQ+ employee network – all grew their memberships and contributed to eLearning modules, policies and guides to ensure we continue to promote a truly inclusive culture.

For the second year running, our gender pay gap report showed a zero median pay gap. By comparison, figures published in April 2022 through the government's gender pay gap reporting mechanism, showed women in a sample of 100 large charity employers earning on average 90p, for every £1 men earn.

### Senior management pay

Sense is a complex organisation which works across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our workforce is engaged not only in health and social care, providing specialist personalised support to help people communicate and make the most of their potential, but also education, campaigning and supporter engagement work, while our retail arm runs over 100 shops in England and Wales.

Our sister organisation, Sense International, works with partners in East Africa, parts of Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

Salaries for the Chief Executive and the executive team are set and reviewed by the remuneration committee, a sub-committee of our board of trustees. The benefits available are in line with other employees, and pay is externally benchmarked in a similar way.

## The governance of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association

During 2021/22, and up to the adoption of the annual report and financial statements by the Board, there have been 17 Trustees, some of whom were in post for part of the year.

Trustees are also (for the purposes of company law) Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. Their names are set out later in this report.

Under the current Articles, Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees and can serve two terms of four years. Those co-opted can be reappointed annually, up to a maximum of eight years.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) usually meets four times a year and Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings.

## Sub-committees

The Board is supported by four sub-committees: Finance and Audit, Remuneration, Nominations and the Engagement sub-committees. Each sub-committee has written Terms of Reference, which are reviewed as necessary and included in the Governance Handbook. The Board appoints the members of the sub-committees annually and receives either the minutes from their meetings, or reports of their activities, with any recommendations.

### **Finance and Audit sub-committee**

The Finance and Audit sub-committee's main purposes are to:

- Ensure that financial resources are deployed appropriately in furtherance of the charity's strategic objectives.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of Sense's internal and external auditing procedures and outcomes.
- Report to and advise the Board on all matters within the purview of the Committee.

Committee membership comprises at least three Trustees, in addition to the Chair (the Honorary Treasurer). Apart from Trustees, the Committee can co-opt new members who they feel will bring relevant financial expertise.

The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources attend the meetings.

## **Nominations sub-committee**

The role of the Nominations sub-committee is to:

- Identify skills gaps in the membership of the Board of Trustees.
- Oversee the recruitment process of Board members and recommend prospective Trustees to the Board for appointment or co-option, ensuring that, once appointed, they have an appropriate induction.

Membership of the sub-committee comprises at least one other Trustee, in addition to the Chair. The Chief Executive and the Head of Governance attend the meetings.

Prospective Trustees are interviewed by the Nominations sub-committee and, if successful, their appointment is recommended to the Board. With the agreement of the Chair, nominees are invited to a Board meeting as observers, following which, with the agreement of the Board, they are appointed or co-opted as Trustees.

New Trustees receive a comprehensive induction pack. An appropriate induction plan is also put in place, which involves meetings with senior staff, internal and external training as necessary, and visits to Sense's services as appropriate.

## **Remuneration sub-committee**

The Remuneration sub-committee ensures that Sense's remuneration strategy for the CEO and members of the Executive Team, and its implementation, is perceived by all stakeholders to be transparent, fair and effective; that total remuneration is commensurate with personal and corporate performance and market expectations; and that overall packages enable Sense to recruit suitably skilled, qualified and experienced people.

The membership comprises the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, with a quorum of two. The Chief Executive is a non-voting ex officio member, but is not present for discussions regarding his own remuneration. The Director of People may be asked to attend for certain items.

## **Engagement sub-committee**

The Engagement sub-committee is responsible for advising the Board about fundraising and marketing matters, monitoring the implementation of the Engagement Strategy, providing oversight of key activity, campaigns and outcomes and making recommendations about plans and activities.

The Committee has at least one member in addition to the Chair and can co-opt external members. The meetings are attended by the Group Director of Engagement.

## **Executive Team**

The Board delegates day-to-day operational management of the organisation to the Chief Executive. The broad areas of delegation, for which he is accountable, have been agreed by the Board and are set out in the Governance Handbook.

To ensure these responsibilities are discharged effectively, the Chief Executive is responsible for appointing, managing and developing senior staff to take direct responsibility for these areas, and for putting in place appropriate reporting and assurance mechanisms.

The Executive Team meets regularly and includes the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operational Services, Group Director of Finance and Resources, Group Director of Engagement, five other functional Directors and the Head of Governance.

## **The Articles of Association for Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

The Board agreed in June 2021 to revised Articles, which included updated Objects, making it clear that, while Sense primarily supports and works with people who are deafblind, we also work with people with a range of complex disabilities.

Following an Extraordinary General Meeting of company members held on July 27 2021, which adopted the new Articles, the Charity Commission consented to the amendment of the Objects, and the Articles were accepted by Companies House on 16 September 2021.

## The Governance Handbook

In addition to the areas covered above (Terms of Reference and delegated matters), the 'Governance Handbook' also includes sections on the values of Sense, our commitment to diversity, the appointment of Trustees, and role profiles for the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, other Trustees; the Trustee induction process; the Trustee Code of Conduct; the Trustee conflict of interest policy; and the Board's agenda cycle. An updated version (the 7th) was last approved by the Board in March 2022.

## The Charity Governance Code

The Code specifies that the Boards of large charities should publish brief statements in the annual report on three areas:

### **Principle 4: Describing the charity's approach to risk.**

This can be found on page 47.

### **Principle 5: Explaining how the board is reviewed.**

An internal Board review took place in April 2021. The results, which were positive, with the overall conclusion that the Board operates very effectively as a team, in a positive and transparent atmosphere and takes decisions well, were reported to the Board in June 2021.

Further consideration will be given to a further Board review in 2023/24.

### **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion**

The Board is committed to having a diverse membership, with a reasonable balance across various areas including race, gender, age, involvement of people with complex disabilities or their family members, and people from various professional backgrounds and to work to achieve greater diversity.

One of the outcomes of the Governance Review was agreement about the need to increase the diversity of Trustees and to recruit Trustees with a lived experience of disabilities, also noting the under-representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Four new Trustees were appointed, three of whom have lived experience of disabilities either personally, or as a family member. We were able to increase diversity overall in relation to disability, age profile and LGBT backgrounds. We were not able to improve representation of trustees from an ethnic minority background.

## Public benefit

Trustees have referred to the information contained in the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The information contained in this report about our services and achievements gives clear examples of how our work is beneficial and brings public benefit. Our objectives for next year show that Sense will continue to provide public benefit in line with our objects.

## The Sense Group

### Working together

#### **Our Patron: HRH The Princess Royal**

The Sense Group comprises two discrete legal entities: Sense and Sense International, in addition to the subsidiaries as set out below.

Both Sense and Sense International are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee, with their own Boards and Memorandum and Articles. The objects of both charities are similar in referring to supporting people who are deafblind and have sensory impairments.

Our shared vision is a world where no one who is deafblind or has complex disabilities is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Each organisation runs its own activities to work towards this vision.

Information about Sense International is given below, but additional details can be found in their own annual report and financial statements.

Sense is the trading name for Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association, which is a registered charity (charity number: 289868) and a company limited by guarantee (company number: 01825301). It is governed by its Articles of Association.

Sense works primarily in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the Corporate Trustee of the Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham). It is the sole member of Sense International and Sense4Enterprise Limited, and also holds 100% of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited.

The Objects approved in 2021 are as follows:

### 3 Objects

The objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:

- 3.1 primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments;
- 3.2 and to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support  
(together, the "beneficiaries").

Sense International is a registered charity (charity number: 1076497), a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986) and is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association. It works on a global basis, raising the needs of people with deafblindness and working with partner organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Sense is the only member of Sense International.

Sense also has a number of subsidiaries:

**Helping Sense Limited** is Sense's trading company (company number: 02214430). It is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association, and its main activity is the sale of goods through Sense's charity shops. The profits from its activities are donated to Sense.

**Sense4Enterprise Limited** (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities.

**The Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham)** is a registered charity (charity number: 528908). The Charity Commission granted a linking order, permitting its activities to be reported within Sense's report without the need to file its own separate annual report and financial statements. It is governed by its trust deed, but does not operate in its own right.

This is the consolidated annual report and financial statements for all the Sense organisations. Sense International publishes its own annual reports and financial statements that describe its activities and finances in more detail.

## **Sense Group trustees and senior staff**

### **Members of the Board from 1 April 2021 to the present**

Dr Justin Molloy (Chair) (RC) (re-appointed by the Board for a second 4-year term as Chair in September 2021)

Gillian Wood (Vice Chair), (Chair of NC) RC, F&A

Andrew Pearson (Chair of F&A) (EC, RC, TB)

Saeed Ahmed

George Aivazoglou (Chair of EC) (resigned 11 May 2022)

Natalie Assad (NC) (resigned 8 December 2021)

Ashling Barvé (QB)

Graham Callister

Mark Cammies (F&A, EC, TB)

Ben Cooper (appointed 9 March 2022)

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Vivienne Hoskins (appointed 9 March 2022)

Simon Jones (F&A)

Mythily Katsaris (F&A)

Benedict Leigh

Brian Symington

Nathan Taylor (appointed 9 March 2022)

Mark Westwell (appointed 9 March 2022)

### **Key (to the initials shown above)**

#### **Sub-Committees of the Board**

EC – Engagement Committee

F&A – Finance & Audit Committee

RC – Remuneration Committee

#### **Other Internal Boards of which Trustees are members**

QB – Quality Board

TB – Trading Board

During this year there were five female and twelve male Trustees/Directors.

### **Sense International Board from 1 April 2021 to the present**

Sunil Sheth (Chair)

Sunil Shah (Treasurer)

Maria Arce-Moreira

Richard Cooper

Nicholas Corby

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Mythily Katsaris (appointed September 2021)

Dean Lumer

Lucy Roberts

Raaxeet Shah

Verity Stiff

Lauren Watters

Gillian Wood

During the year there were 6 female and 6 male Trustees/Directors.

### **Sense Executive Team**

**Richard Kramer** – Chief Executive (also Chief Executive of Sense International)

**Maria Horton** – Group Director of Operations

**Catherine Still** – Group Director of Finance and Resources

**Chris Jarrett** – Group Director of Engagement (resigned December 2021)

**Louise Robertshaw** – Group Director of Engagement (appointed February 2022)

**Alison Marshall** – Director of Sense International (resigned August 2022)

**Kavita Prasad** – Director of Sense International (appointed August 2022)

**Adrian Darkin** – Director of Trading

**Alison Bennett** – Director of Human Resources (resigned June 2021)

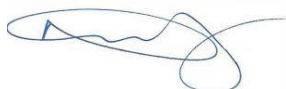
**Emma Evans** – People Director (appointed August 2021)

**Jonathan Monk** – Director of Operational Programmes (resigned September 2022)

**Tony Colson** – Director of ICT

In the year there were seven female Directors and five male Directors.

The Trustees' Report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Dr Justin Molloy, Chair

7 December 2022

## **Section 172 statement**

Sense is required by the Companies Act 2006 to make an annual statement about how Directors have 'promoted the success of the company' having regard to the following matters set out in Section 172 of that Act:

### **a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term**

This is a fundamental consideration in relation to any major decisions made by the Board.

The Board's agreement to a new refreshed 5-year strategy recommended by the Executive Team was the most important decision taken during the last year.

### **b) The interests of the company's employees**

Sense aspires to be an employer of choice. A report from the Director of People goes to all Board meetings for discussion. This includes updates on general issues such as recruitment and retention, progress with the EDI strategy, and also proposals for new Reward Policies and a new Internal Communications strategy.

### **c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

Our key stakeholders are the children and families and the other people who Sense supports. Reports about our services are discussed at every Board meeting. The External Chair of our Quality and Safeguarding Boards attends the Board annually to give a report

about their activities, which provides assurance to Trustees about the quality of Sense's services.

Our supporters and volunteers are also important stakeholders. The Board receives regular updates about Supporter Engagement, an important strand of our strategy. We keep in regular contact with many of them through newsletters.

Working with other charities in our sector is also important. The Board is updated about work with them on campaigns, including working with sector partners on applying to be a core participant in the upcoming Covid-19 Inquiry.

Business relationships are discussed at Finance and Audit Committee meetings and, where necessary, at the Board.

#### **d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**

Sense fosters good community relationships wherever we have services and shops. One of the key aims of many of our services is to enable the people we support to be more integrated in their local communities. The Board also discussed the use of Sense TouchBase Pears as a resource for the local community.

Sense shops in England and Wales all have good community links. They also run fun weeks throughout the year with in-store activities for customers and the general public, enabling them to learn about the people we support and other ways to support the charity.

The internal 'Trading Board', which is attended by the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee and another Trustee, receives regular reports on community activities.

#### **e) The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

The reputation of Sense is critical to our long-term future.

As noted above, Trustees receive annual reports from the Quality and Safeguarding Boards, which have an external chair and members.

Sense's Whistleblowing Policy gives access to an independent external organisation. Were it to be invoked, the Finance and Audit Committee has responsibility for monitoring the impact of the Policy throughout the organisation and to ensure that any issues raised are dealt with effectively.

#### **f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company**

As noted in last year's statement, Sense has almost 1,000 company members, very few of whom attend, or appoint proxies for, Annual General Meetings. The Board decided that instead of holding an Annual General meeting in 2021, a letter from the Chair setting out key issues discussed by the Board over the year would be sent, not only to the Company members, but to an additional 2,000 people who are active supporters of Sense who receive regular newsletters.

### **Statement of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

The Trustees (who are also directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company/group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2019);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In accordance with Section 418, directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each director in office at the date the directors' report is approved, that:

- so far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company and the group's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

## Internal financial controls

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, financial and otherwise, in place. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A five-year strategic plan and an annual budget approved by the Board. A number of matters are specifically reserved for the Board's approval.
- Regular consideration of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and the Board.
- The annual internal audit programme did not take place in 2020/21 due to the pandemic. It is currently being reviewed and will be agreed by the Finance and Audit sub-committee. Outcomes of the audits are reported to the subcommittee with action plans.
- The development of policy documents covering all major strategic and operational activities. The Executive Team reviews these with appropriate regularity and consultation.

## Anti-bribery policy

Sense has an anti-bribery policy, which sets out the definition of bribery and makes it the responsibility of all employees and Trustees to prevent and report any bribery issues. If necessary, this can be through Sense's Whistleblowing procedure which provides a number of possible contacts, including an external organisation.

## Financial review of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association 2021/22

### Overview

The year ended 31 March 2022 represented a more normal year for our finances as most of the Covid-related restrictions were lifted and activity levels across our trading shops, services and events gradually normalised. Our shops were only closed for the first two weeks of the year during April 2021 and, whilst activity in our accommodation, day, education and community services was restricted for longer, we were at least able to get most services fully open by year end. Key fundraising events also started up again in the second half of the year.

The pandemic therefore had much less of an effect on our finances than in the previous year. However, we still felt the effects of returning to normal levels of activity, especially in take up of community, day and education services to the people we support some of whom were understandably nervous about returning to full social integration. This also had an effect on the delivery of some of our charitable services and meant curtailed activity in the first part of the year.

The year saw significant challenges in recruitment, particularly in our commissioned services which became increasingly difficult in line with others in our sectors. Combined with the impact of higher National Minimum Wage this drove upward pressure on pay rates as our colleagues coped with the effects of the increase in the cost of living, and this remains an ongoing challenge.

In April 2021 Sense acquired the assets and ongoing trading activity of The Otterhayes Trust - a collection of accommodation units on its own site in Devon, supporting 21 people - for a cash consideration of £560k. The acquisition boosted fixed assets which were recognised at fair value: as a result, negative goodwill of £1.174m was recognised and immediately amortised resulting in a non-recurring credit classified as other income. Since acquisition we have concentrated on upgrading the site and investing in the buildings, as well as enhancing connections for the people who live at Otterhayes and the local community.

## Financial highlights

The acquisition of Otterhayes contributed to growth of £2.7m in income from charitable activities with other growth from fee increases and expansion of existing services. Income from fundraising fell by £0.7m compared to an exceptionally strong prior year and was better than we had expected or budgeted for. Trading income generated by our shops was buoyant as footfall and sales quickly rose up to pre-pandemic levels, helped by a healthy level of stock donations and plenty of volunteers to help us turn donated goods into sales. We resumed our programme of opening new shops with eight new shops added during the year bringing the total trading arm up 115 shops by year end.

This year we also recognised the amounts received under the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund grant scheme which had supported the significant losses incurred in our trading arm following the lockdown and shop closure announced by the Government in March 2020.

Overall, income increased year on year by £7.3m largely due to a full year of income from the shops, compared to the pandemic year when income was severely reduced because of shop closures for much of the year.

Sense International saw a mixed year with reduced income from UK government support: however, the year ended with unrestricted reserves rising by £0.26m which means it is set for a good year in 2022/23.

Group net income – excluding the actuarial gain on the defined benefit pension scheme - was £4.4m (2021: £5.1m). Under FRS102 we accounted for a pension scheme gain of £8.5m against a loss of £4.2m last year. In total, reserves therefore grew by £12.9m (2021: increase of £0.9m).

During the year we paid off the £2.4m remaining on the variable interest rate Lloyds Bank loan which funded construction of Sense Touch Base Pears and also invested in capital expenditure of £3.3m (2020: £2.7m) reflecting a catch up in activity from the pandemic year and the Otterhayes acquisition.

Cash and cash equivalents rose marginally by £0.1m (2021: £7.4m), leaving cash balances at year end of £19.7m (2021: £19.6m) offset by bank loans of £5.6m (2021: £8.3m).

The FRS102 defined benefit pension scheme liability reduced to £0.9m (2021: £10.0m) driven by higher than expected investment returns and an increase in the assumed discount rate used to value future pension liabilities.

Boosted by this non-cash accounting gain, reserves increased to £45.4m (2021: £32.6m) including £3.3m (2021: £3.4m) of Restricted Reserves and £11.1m of reserves Designated by Trustees for future projects.

Our operating and cash position will allow us to continue to focus on delivering our strategic objectives.

## Reserves

The Trustees regularly review free reserves to ensure that there are adequate funds to support all the activity that Sense Group undertakes. This review reflects the need to maintain our considerable property estate in order to continue to provide the high quality of services to the people we support, to fund projects to grow services and to ensure an adequate contingency is maintained for unforeseen events, especially given the recent pandemic impact.

This year Designated Reserves have been set by the Trustees at £11.1m (2021: £10.5m) reflecting planned investments in service delivery and achieving the strategic plan.

We also consider unforeseen risks when setting a minimum level of free reserves. We define free reserves as unrestricted reserves minus fixed assets (offset by borrowings taken out to support the purchase of those assets) minus any designated reserves. The pension deficit is excluded from this calculation as the liability, which is reassessed annually, is a long term one where cash flow risk is managed by a long term deficit reduction plan agreed with the pension fund.

Free reserves at March 2022 were £5.8m (2021: £6.3m). After considering various scenarios and the risks attached to each of our income streams, the Trustees consider that minimum free reserves of £3.9m are required (2021: £3.6m): we are therefore above our target.

## Going concern

The financial statements show that our cash and reserves position means that we are able to fund foreseeable operational and capital expenditure together with pension fund deficit reduction payments and bank loan repayments. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and the risks that might threaten those forecasts.

Together with our risk management policies, the strong reserves position allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and that therefore it is appropriate to continue to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

## Pensions

In addition to ongoing defined contribution pension schemes, Sense is a legacy member of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), formerly the London Pension Fund Authority, a public sector provider of defined benefit pensions and a traditional pension body for local authorities. Sense closed membership of the LPP scheme to new entrants in 2003 and has since been working to manage the actuarial risk that all defined benefit schemes bring.

In 2014 remaining active members were asked to voluntarily leave the scheme and join the defined contribution scheme offered for all other employees. This transfer took effect in October 2014 and Sense therefore now has no remaining active members in the LPP scheme and no further service liabilities are being incurred for active members.

We continue to review options with LPP on whether and when to request a cessation value and leave the scheme completely - in the meantime we will continue with the long-term repayment plan which is reviewed every three years. Nevertheless, the considerable number of past and present employees who are pensioners or 'deferred' members (that is,

no longer active members but not yet drawing their pension) means that Sense must account for its share of the deficit of the LPP scheme as explained in detail in note 11.

The deficit, calculated under FRS 102 accounting rules, reduced in the year from £10.0m to £0.8m driven by 2 factors:

- The increase in asset values due to higher than assumed investment returns accounts for £6.4m of the reduction in the overall liability.
- The increase in the discount rate assumption, driven by rising long term interest rates, accounts for £2.2m of the reduction in the overall liability.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for the management of risks to the Chief Executive and the Executive Team.

The Executive Team is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk, including those identified on departmental risk registers, and for reporting on this to the Finance and Audit sub-committee. The Executive Team is also responsible for developing risk mitigation strategies and controls, and for implementing actions to minimise or reduce risk to acceptable levels. The risk register is reviewed at every Executive meeting, and the departmental risk registers are reviewed by each Executive for their areas. The Executive agree which department specific risks should be included on the corporate risk register.

The Finance and Audit sub-committee is responsible for overseeing the establishment and maintenance of good practice in this area and for reporting to the Board at each of its meetings when the corporate risk register is reviewed.

A new format for the risk register was recommended for agreement by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and agreed by the Board in September 2021. It is organised in the same way as previously, but is more focused and reflects our current activity better. It gives a realistic assessment of risks with fewer being rated as red after the controls and mitigating actions are taken into account. The corporate register is used as a dynamic document by Executive Team and risks on Departmental registers which affect the wider organisation are escalated onto it.

There are currently no risks rated as red after controls have been implemented. Three of the most highly rated amber risks are shown below.

<b>Uncertainty/risk</b>	<b>Possible consequences</b>	<b>Controls being implemented</b>
<p>Staff: We do not have the rewards, training, selection processes or appeal to improve recruitment and retention.</p>	<p>The current situation of recruitment to social care posts is very challenging and is in danger of posing a risk to delivery of service and reputation in some areas of the country.</p> <p>High turnover causes increased costs and is disruptive to service delivery, leading to difficulty in achieving strategic goals.</p>	<p>There are additional temporary recruitment staff in place to speed up our processes.</p> <p>Increased rewards are being offered in some areas. The EDI strategy is being embedded and there are reviews of the attraction strategy, the development of a new digital recruitment strategy and a new LandD strategy.</p> <p>We may need to consider more retention measures over the coming months.</p>
<p>The programme to develop regional Touch Bases is unsuccessful, or leads to financial losses.</p>	<p>There is difficulty either with the development of the new TouchBases or they are not used as much as envisaged, leading to financial losses.</p>	<p>There is a robust development approval process in place and there has been investment in project management oversight and the development of an engagement strategy.</p>

		Budgets and targets will be closely monitored.
Sense is subject to, or experiences disruption from a significant cyber-attack.	Computer systems may be unusable for a considerable period and there could be a substantial loss of personal and other data, causing widespread disruption.	There is an independent cyber-risk register. An external cyber-security audit has taken place and the recommendations will be implemented. Multi factor authentication (MFA) is being implemented for all users with remote connections. A virtual chief information security officer (CISO) has been appointed to oversee our threat level, monitor new threats and propose corrective action.

## Energy and carbon report 2021/22

The table below gives a summary of our energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions for the financial year 2021/22, and also compares with the previous year’s data 2020/21. Due to the impacts of Covid-19 across the organisation during 2020/21, Appendix A of this report also shows the emissions for 2019/2020 along with the comparison between 2021/2022 and 2019/2020, as this is deemed to reflect the actual business operations more closely.

**Figure 1: Sense GHG emissions and energy use data for period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

**SENSE - GHG Emissions and Energy Use Data for Period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

Energy/Activity	Scope - GHG Protocol Corporate Standard	Period 2021/22				Variance v 2020/21			Variance v 2019/20		
		kWh	Emission Factor	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %
Combustion of Natural Gas	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	4,956,535	0.18316	907.8	38.42%	235,555	39.9	5.0%	414,180	72.7	9.1%
Combustion of Oil	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	221,039	0.24677	54.5	2.31%	51,824	12.8	30.6%	117,569	29.0	113.6%
Transport Own Vehicles (Diesel)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	1,533,384	0.23686	363.2	15.37%	328,653	68.5	27.3%	-806,425	-209.2	-34.5%
Transport Own Vehicles (Petrol)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	303,244	0.22980	69.7	2.95%	231,885	53.0	325.0%	121,988	27.3	67.3%
	<b>Scope 1 - TOTALS</b>	<b>7,014,202</b>		<b>1,395.3</b>	<b>59.04%</b>	<b>847,917</b>	<b>179.4</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>-152,687</b>	<b>-80.1</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>
Electricity	Scope 2 (Energy Indirect)	3,916,158	0.21233	831.5	35.19%	787,061	31.7	25.2%	-212,275	-223.7	-5.1%
Transport - employee-owned vehicles business travel	Scope 3 (Other Indirect)	586,529	0.23262	136.4	5.77%	205,138	45.6	53.8%	-519,025	-126.8	-46.9%
<b>TOTALS (Gross)</b>		<b>11,516,889</b>		<b>2,363.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,840,117</b>	<b>328.7</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>-883,988</b>	<b>-430.6</b>	<b>-7.1%</b>
<b>Buildings Intensity Ratio (kWh/m2 &amp; tCO2/m2)</b>		<b>162</b>		<b>0.032</b>		<b>-12</b>	<b>-0.003</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>	<b>-160</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-49.7%</b>
<b>Transport Intensity Ratio (kWh/FTE &amp; tCO2/FTE)</b>		<b>1,477</b>		<b>0.347</b>		<b>505</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>52.0%</b>	<b>-699</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-32.1%</b>

### Emission changes v 2020/21

It is recognised that the figures for 2020/21 were largely deflated due to the impacts of Covid-19. This resulted in a significant reduction in emissions for this period due to reduced activity across the business. Therefore, comparisons made between the past year and 2021/22, show disproportionate increases in emissions across all scopes. However, the above table also shows comparisons between the past year and 2019/2020, as these periods are deemed more reflective of normal business operations.

As a result of these comparisons the following observations are noted:

1. The property floor area has increased from 27,279m<sup>2</sup> in 2019/220, 42,205m<sup>2</sup> in 2020/21 and 56,030m<sup>2</sup> in 2021/22. This is reflected by the increased number of retail units across the portfolio. This increase in floor area has also had an impact on the building intensity ratio, which has seen a significant fall year on year.
2. The witnessed gas increase is believed to be associated to the increase footprint of the estate and the requirement to comfort condition this space.
3. Oil consumption represents a very small proportion of the estates emissions but has seen a significant percentage increase. This is believed to be due to the method of

recording consumption. Currently no meters are in place and consumption is based in delivery notes. Site delivery data is not truly reflective of site consumption and therefore year on year variances will occur until such time as we are able to install consumption meter to these locations.

4. When the data for 2020/21 is compared with 2019/20 data it can be seen that diesel emissions have fallen sharply, yet petrol emissions have risen, and this is believed to represent the move from diesel vehicles to petrol. It is however recognised that overall Transport Emissions for Scope 1 and three have fallen sharply when compared with the 2019/20 figures.
5. Employee Own Vehicle emissions has also fallen drastically when compared with 2019/20 figures and this is due to revised working practices and the ability for staff to work from home.

## Company information

Sense is a registered Charity Number 289868. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England and Wales Number 01825301. Registered office at 101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG.

## The reporting period

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

## Organisational boundaries

We have used the Financial Control model as the basis to calculate our emissions, including everything that we own and operate within England and Wales.

## Quantification and reporting methodology

We have followed the UK HM Government “Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance March 2019”. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard.

Data has been gathered from the following sources:

- Gas Combustion – Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.
- Oil Combustion – Supplier delivery quantities (litres) for all fuels.
- Electricity - Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.
- Transport – Own Fleet – Finance records for litres of fuel (Petrol and Diesel) purchased.
- Transport – Business Mileage employee own vehicles – Individual employee expense claim records for business mileages during the reporting period. We have then used the “average car: unknown fuel” factors to calculate kWh and tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

In calculating the emissions we have used the UK Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, conversion factors 2021 – revised January 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021-revised-january-2022>

### Intensity ratios

For all our property energy usage we have chosen a ratio based on the Floor Area GIA.

For our transport energy usage we have chosen a ration based on our number of employees (FTE).

### Energy efficiency action

The past year has seen intense action regarding the organisation’s aims of reducing energy consumption and carbon output.

The major contributors to carbon output (property, fleet and supply chain) are now under the direct management of the Sense Property team. This has enabled a more co-ordinated approach involving the whole organisation.

Sense is currently considering a fully inclusive environment strategy. As a first step approach to this we are seeking proposals from specialist environmental consultants in first establishing accurately what our carbon output baseline is, what we will need to do to achieve a reduction in the carbon emissions we are responsible for, and what investment will be required.

Running in parallel to this we have refurbished the main London office incorporating LED lighting to reduce energy, incorporated an agile working approach to the office environment, which has released office space to enable us to incorporate another charity tenant increasing the more efficient use of floor space.

This approach has been adopted in relocating our Sense office in Wakefield from an old inefficient listed building to a modern building with much better energy efficiency, and the ability to host agile working.

When we take on new buildings (such as shops, warehouses) our standard specification will always incorporate low energy measures, and as a minimum include LED lighting and thermostatically controlled heating and increased insulation where appropriate.

The trading operation recycles more than 5,500 tonnes per annum of clothing and furniture.

We have engaged specialist consultants to carry out energy audits on our property portfolio. As a first step we are proposing to undertake these surveys on all our freehold operational properties (approximately 30 mainly residential homes). This will enable us to highlight projects which will have the most effective result in reducing energy use and carbon output. The first projects are already being tendered and include improvements to insulation, heating controls, and the installation of solar panels. This is being funded for the first time from a dedicated energy saving budget.

As part of our planned maintenance budget our approach has been to take up any opportunity to improve our energy efficiency. Where boilers, windows, and rooves need replacement, this will always be based on A and A+ boilers and windows and upgrading to current Building Regulation standards for roof insulation.

As part of a phased improvement to one of our largest properties we are currently replacing all lighting with LED fittings (approximately 700 units) and taking the opportunity to insulate the roof voids.

We also considering the fitting of a large solar panel array which has the potential of significantly reducing the electricity required from the grid every year.

Throughout our vehicle fleet we are carrying out surveys to profile usage and the suitability of electric battery powered vehicles instead of fossil fuel. To support this, we will install electric charging points in selected properties, including three of our largest complexes. Our overall aim is to replace fossil fuelled vehicles with battery powered vehicles where appropriate.

Finally, we appreciate the importance of having our supply chain adopting the same overall environmental aims and we apply an environmental/sustainability factor along with cost when choosing suppliers.

### Assurance and verification

This report and the verification of the data was undertaken by an external independent CIBSE qualified Low Carbon Consultant and ESOS Lead Assessor.

# ***Independent auditors' report to the members of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association***

## ***Report on the audit of the financial statements***

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### **Opinion**

In our opinion, Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association's group financial statements and parent charitable company financial statements (the "financial statements"):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of the group's and parent charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, and of the group's cash flows for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Annual Report and Financial Statements (the "Annual Report"), which comprise: the consolidated balance sheet and company balance sheet as at 31 March 2022; the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated summary income and expenditure account and the consolidated cash flow statement for the year then ended; the accounting policies; and the notes to the financial statements.

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### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Independence**

We remained independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, which includes the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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### **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

Based on our work undertaken in the course of the audit, the Companies Act 2006 requires us also to report certain opinions and matters as described below.

### *Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees*

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit the information given in the Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and the Strategic Report and the Report of the Trustees have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In addition, in light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we are required to report if we have identified any material misstatements in the Strategic Report and the Report of the Trustees. We have nothing to report in this respect.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Statement of responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The trustees are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group and parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and charitable company/industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Charities Act 2011, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries. Audit procedures performed included:

- enquiry of management and the Board of Trustees, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and the finance and audit committee;
- identifying and testing journal entries, including journal entries posted with unusual account combinations to revenue;
- assessing financial statement disclosures, and testing to supporting documentation, for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations or through collusion.

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditors' report.

### *Use of this report*

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the charity's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

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## **Other required reporting**

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### **Companies Act 2006 exception reporting**

Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- we have not obtained all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.



Daniel Chan (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
Birmingham

15 December 2022

## Consolidated Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2022 £000s	Total 2021 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	10,658	2,293	-	12,951	13,651
Charitable activities	1	52,602	1,289	-	53,891	51,190
Trading		12,375	-	-	12,375	4,475
Investment income	2	26	3	-	29	126
Covid-19 grants	3	1,827	-	-	1,827	5,360
Other income	3	1,448	-	-	1,448	426
<b>Total income</b>		<b>78,936</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,521</b>	<b>75,228</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
	4					
Raising funds		4,858	-	-	4,858	4,010
Charitable activities		57,009	3,430	9	60,448	54,215
Trading		11,794	2	-	11,796	10,861
Other		1,114	-	-	1,114	1,247
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>74,775</b>	<b>3,432</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>78,216</b>	<b>70,333</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	6	117	-	-	117	155
<b>Net income/(expense)</b>		<b>4,278</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>4,422</b>	<b>5,050</b>
Transfers between funds	18	307	(307)	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expense) before transfers</b>		<b>4,585</b>	<b>(154)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>4,422</b>	<b>5,050</b>
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit pension scheme	10	8,453	-	-	8,453	(4,163)
<b>Net increase/ (decrease) in funds</b>	7	<b>13,038</b>	<b>(154)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>12,875</b>	<b>887</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2021		28,742	3,439	369	32,550	31,663
Net increase/ (decrease) in funds		13,038	(154)	(9)	12,875	887
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2022</b>	18,19	<b>41,780</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>45,425</b>	<b>32,550</b>

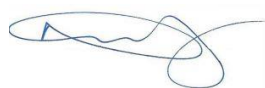
The net income of unrestricted funds is analysed between the general fund, designated funds and pension deficit in note 18.

## Consolidated balance sheet - as at 31 March 2022

	Notes	31 March 2022 £000s	31 March 2021 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	31,442	30,253
Intangible assets	12	-	-
Investments	13	-	1
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>31,442</b>	<b>30,254</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		451	376
Debtors	14	8,818	9,207
Investments	15	4,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		15,708	15,586
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>28,977</b>	<b>29,169</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	16	(8,760)	(8,926)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>20,217</b>	<b>20,243</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
		<b>51,659</b>	<b>50,497</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	17	(5,365)	(7,913)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>46,294</b>	<b>42,584</b>
Provisions – pension liability	10	(869)	(10,034)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>45,425</b>	<b>32,550</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
General fund	18,19	31,552	28,238
Pension provision	18,19	(869)	(10,034)
Designated funds	18,19	11,097	10,538
Restricted funds	18,19	3,285	3,439
Endowment fund	18,19	360	369
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>45,425</b>	<b>32,550</b>

The notes on pages 68 to 95 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 57 to 95 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 December 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrew Pearson, Treasurer

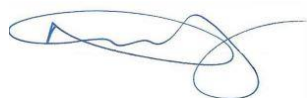
Registered company number 1825301

## Company balance sheet - as at 31 March 2022

	Notes	31 March 2022 £000s	31 March 2021 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	31,399	30,189
Intangible assets	12	-	-
Investments	13	30	30
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>31,429</b>	<b>30,219</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		451	376
Debtors	14	8,512	8,938
Investments	15	4,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		14,707	14,487
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>27,670</b>	<b>27,801</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	16	(8,755)	(8,807)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>18,915</b>	<b>18,994</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	17	(5,333)	(7,872)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>45,011</b>	<b>41,341</b>
Provisions – pension liability	10	(869)	(10,034)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>44,142</b>	<b>31,307</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>			
General fund	18,19	31,183	28,184
Pension provision	18,19	(869)	(10,034)
Designated funds	18,19	11,097	10,538
Restricted funds	18,19	2,371	2,249
Endowment fund	18,19	360	370
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>44,142</b>	<b>31,307</b>

The notes on pages 68 to 95 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 57 to 95 were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 December 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrew Pearson, Treasurer

Registered company number 1825301

## Consolidated summary income and expenditure account – for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
Income from continuing operations	82,608	75,257
Total expenditure of continuing operations	(77,814)	(69,983)
Operating surplus	4,794	5,274
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	117	155
Interest receivable and similar income	29	126
Interest payable and similar charges	(269)	(310)
Net interest and administration costs of defined benefit scheme	(249)	(195)
<b>Net income for the year</b>	<b>4,422</b>	<b>5,050</b>

## Consolidated cash flow statement – for the year ended 31 March 2022

		2022	2021
	Note	£000s	£000s
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	23	5,671	10,134
<b>Investing activities – investments</b>			
Interest received		29	125
Interest paid		(269)	(310)
<b>Investing activities – capital expenditure</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,307)	(2,612)
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		689	556
<b>Financing activities</b>			
Bank loan repayments		(2,691)	(460)
<b>Increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>7,433</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year		19,586	12,153
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year</b>	26	<b>19,708</b>	<b>19,586</b>

## **Accounting policies of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

### **Statement of compliance**

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Accounting and Reporting for Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, which is applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2020) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act from presenting its individual statement of financial activities.

The net income of the charity for the year was £4.382 million (2021: £5.191 million).

### **Public benefit entity**

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### **Preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis**

The financial statements show that cash and reserves are at a healthy level, meaning that revenue expenditure including annual pension contributions and loan repayments can be comfortably covered in the future. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and have also taken account of the risks that might threaten the expected position, with particular reference to the experiences of the pandemic year.

Trustees have also reviewed the risk register in detail during the year including a review of risk mitigation strategies. Given our risk management policies and strong reserves position, the Trustees believe that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and therefore it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

## Group financial statements

These financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiaries: Sense International, Helping Sense Limited, and Sense4Enterprise Limited.

### Income recognition

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Fees and allowances receivable for residential care and similar services are accounted for in the period in which the service is provided. Trading income represents goods supplied to customers at invoiced amounts and is recognised at the time of sale. Legacy income is recognised on a receivable basis when it is probable that legacy income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants received in advance which include donor-imposed conditions that specify a time period in which the expenditure of resources can take place are accounted for as deferred income and recognised as a liability, until such a time as the expenditure takes place.

Donations and legacies is recognised as income when received except when the income is related to major events. Non-cash donations, other than goods donated for sale through shops, are stated at an estimate of their value to the charity.

### Expenditure

All expenditure, including any irrecoverable VAT, is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

The cost of generating funds represents the cost of organising fundraising events and activities and the operating costs of the charity's shops. The cost of charitable activities includes all expenditure directly relating to the objects of the charity. Support costs are apportioned to the relevant charitable activity on the basis of salary costs incurred.

Governance costs (comprising internal and external audit, strategic costs and Trustees' expenses) are included in support costs.

Redundancy and termination costs are recognised once the decision to terminate has been made, it is probable that termination will occur, and the amount of the obligation can be measured.

## **Grant income**

Grants received under the Job Retention Scheme are applied for as they become due based on payroll cycles. Grants received are recognised as income and gross payroll costs are recognised as expenditure. Accruals are made for any grants claimed but outstanding at year end.

Grants received under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund in respect of the charity shops are recognised as State Aid up to the level permitted under UK legislation in any financial period. Income is recognised in other income (see note 4 below). No monies in respect of this grant were due or accrued for at year end.

Grants were received under the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund which supports adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not have a contract, to reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience. Sense was eligible to claim this grant in respect of accommodation services. The grant pays for additional infection control measures which include the cost of additional staffing including agency staff. Grants received are recognised as income and the costs the grant covers are shown in expenditure. Grants are only recognised when claims have been made and accepted by the distributing local authority when satisfied that the grant has been spent.

## **Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended use.

## Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful economic lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold property	2%
Short leasehold properties and long leasehold improvements	Over the remaining life of the lease
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Motor vehicles	25%

Freehold land is not depreciated. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are available for use. Individual fixed assets costing £500 or less are not capitalised.

Negative goodwill fully amortised in the year of acquisition.

## Leases

Operating lease rentals are expensed in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

## Stock

Stock relates to new and second-hand goods purchased for sale through the shops, valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Donated goods and Sense merchandise are valued at nil as their intrinsic value is immaterial.

## Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when an obligation arises to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

## Dilapidations

Provision is made for dilapidations in respect of leasehold properties, principally charity shops. The provision reflects an estimate of the costs to make good the leased property at the expiry of the lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. On expiry of a lease, any expenditure in excess of the accumulated provision is released.

## **Pension costs**

The Group operates defined contribution schemes for all staff. Contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), a multi- employer defined benefit scheme, are accounted for as a defined contribution scheme and are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become due.

Pension costs in respect of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), a defined benefit pension scheme closed to new members, are accounted for in accordance with FRS 102. As a result, changes in actuarial assumptions, expected investment return on assets and interest on pension liabilities are charged to the statement of financial activities in the year.

Differences between actual and expected returns on assets, together with differences arising from changes in the assumptions underlying the present value of scheme liabilities and experience of gains and losses arising on scheme liabilities are also recognised in the statement of financial activities. The difference between the market value of assets and the present value of future pension liabilities is shown as a provision on the balance sheet.

## **Fixed assets: subsidiary undertakings**

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost and written down to their realisable value if there has been a permanent diminution in value.

## **Foreign currency**

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date. Exchange differences are recognised within net income/(expenditure).

## **Allocation of funds**

General funds represent unrestricted funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds are those that have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes as detailed in the funds note. Restricted funds are funds that must be used in accordance with specific instructions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular

purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Endowment funds represent assets that must be held permanently by the charity, principally properties. Any capital gains or losses arising on sale of those assets forms part of the fund. Depreciation of endowed property is charged against the fund.

Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

## **Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## **Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## **Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Specific bad debts are recognised and provided for as appropriate.

## **Principal accounting estimates and judgements**

In the application of these accounting policies, management is required to make judgments, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates and the estimates, along with

their underlying assumptions, are continually reviewed. The matters below are considered to be the most important in understanding the judgments that are involved in preparing the financial statements and the uncertainties that could impact the amounts reported.

The following have been identified as a principal accounting estimate:

### Actuarial assumptions in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme

The liability arising from the defined benefit pension scheme is estimated based on a number of key assumptions which are disclosed in note 10.

These assumptions are reviewed annually by the Group's actuaries and auditors.

# Notes to the financial statements of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, for the year ended 31 March 2022

## 1. Income

<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Fundraising	8,972	9,591
Legacies	3,979	4,060
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,951</b>	<b>13,651</b>

<b>Income from charitable activities</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Care and Support Midlands	11,300	10,401
Care and Support East	11,274	11,015
Care and Support South	11,580	11,287
Care and Support North	8,969	9,147
Care and Support Northern Ireland	3,116	2,880
Care and Support Wales	1,744	1,559
Education and development programmes	4,676	3,512
International programmes	711	959
Arts and wellbeing programmes	284	224
Holidays and volunteering	233	200
Adult specialist services	1	4
Children's specialist services	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,891</b>	<b>51,190</b>

Income from charitable activities includes Grants received for a specific purpose which have been spent entirely on that purpose as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Sense	1,172	2,306
Sense International	716	959
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>3,265</b>

## 2. Investment income

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
Bank interest	29	126

## 3. Covid-19 Government Support Grants and Other income

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
<b>Covid-19 related grant income</b>		
Job Retention Scheme	53	2,624
Retail Leisure and Hospitality Fund	1,413	1,869
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	361	867
	1,827	5,360
<b>Other Income</b>		
Negative goodwill	1,174	-
Miscellaneous income	274	426
	1,448	426

Retail Leisure and Hospitality Fund income represents the final tranche of monies due following the ending of Covid related government restrictions on the retail sector during the year.

Negative goodwill arises from amortisation of the negative goodwill created on the acquisition of the activities of The Otterhayes Trust on 12 April 2021.

Miscellaneous income represents training, advice and consultancy provided to other organisations and charities concerned with disability. It also includes rental of office and conference space income at Sense Touch Base Pears.

## 4. Expenditure

Activity	Direct Costs £000s	Apportioned Support Costs £000s	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Fundraising	4,621	237	<b>4,858</b>	4,015
Trading	11,753	43	<b>11,796</b>	10,861
TouchBase Pears	1,027	-	<b>1,027</b>	1,138
Care and Support Midlands	12,125	1,118	<b>13,243</b>	10,916
Care and Support East	9,935	1,090	<b>11,025</b>	10,758
Care and Support South	11,141	1,221	<b>12,362</b>	11,436
Care and Support North	8,156	932	<b>9,088</b>	8,406
Care and Support Northern Ireland	2,707	307	<b>3,014</b>	2,657
Care and Support Wales	1,783	195	<b>1,978</b>	1,669
Education and development programmes	1,947	447	<b>2,394</b>	1,833
International programmes	2,178	171	<b>2,349</b>	2,192
Arts and wellbeing programmes	643	60	<b>703</b>	641
Holidays and volunteering	996	90	<b>1,086</b>	888
Adult specialist services	566	72	<b>638</b>	651
Children's specialist services	604	69	<b>673</b>	670
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,286	119	<b>1,405</b>	1,109
Quality assurance and development	427	48	<b>475</b>	385
Other	102	-	<b>102</b>	108
	<b>71,997</b>	<b>6,219</b>	<b>78,216</b>	70,333

## 4. Expenditure (continued)

### Analysis of apportioned support costs

Activity	Facilities £000s	Manage't £000s	People £000s	Finance £000s	Govern'e £000s	Comms £000s	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Fundraising	13	16	79	66	-	63	237	215
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43	43
TouchBase	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Care and Support Midlands	62	75	372	309	1	299	1,118	931
Care and Support East	60	73	363	302	1	291	1,090	1,004
Care and Support South	67	82	407	338	1	326	1,221	1,125
Care and Support North	51	63	310	258	1	249	932	839
Care and Support Northern Ireland	17	21	102	85	-	82	307	255
Care and Support Wales	11	13	65	54	-	52	195	158
Education programmes	25	30	149	123	1	119	447	323
International programmes	-	157	-	-	14	-	171	178
Arts and wellbeing programmes	3	4	20	17	-	16	60	60
Holidays and volunteering	5	6	30	25	-	24	90	71
Adult specialist services	4	5	24	20	-	19	72	74
Children's specialist services	4	5	23	19	-	18	69	65
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	7	8	39	33	-	32	119	87
Quality assurance and development	3	3	16	13	-	13	48	41
	<b>332</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1,603</b>	<b>6,219</b>	<b>5,475</b>

## 5. Discontinued operations

There were no discontinued operations during the year.

## 6. Gains on sale of tangible fixed assets and investments

	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	117	155

## 7. Net movements in funds

The net movement in funds is stated after charging/ (crediting):

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
Audit fee - Group	74	62
Audit fee - Subsidiaries	7	6
Auditors – non audit fees	42	15
Depreciation – tangible assets	2,720	2,799
Amortisation – negative goodwill	(1,173)	-
Operating lease rentals	4,257	4,157
Interest payable on bank loans	269	310

## 8. Employee remuneration

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	47,635	40,849
Social security costs	3,305	2,970
Termination and redundancy payments	-	55
Pension costs - defined contribution schemes	1,866	1,732
Pension costs - defined benefit scheme (see note 10)	961	936
	<b>53,767</b>	<b>46,542</b>

The average monthly number of employees – excluding volunteers – was 2,557 (2021: 2,555).

Employees earning over £60,000 fell into the following bandings:

	2022	2021
	Number	Number
£60,000 - £70,000	10	6
£70,000 - £80,000	-	2
£80,000 - £90,000	1	2
£90,000 - £100,000	2	2
£110,000 - £120,000	-	-
£120,000 - £130,000	-	1
£130,000 - £140,000	1	-

## 8. Employee remuneration (continued)

Pension contributions for these employees were as follows:

	2022		2021	
	£000s	No.	£000s	No.
Defined contribution schemes	59	14	41	13

The aggregate remuneration of the 12 key management personnel (2022: 10) listed in the Trustees' Report, was £726,005 (2021: £793,634) before pension contributions of £34,823 (2021: £41,211).

## 9. Remuneration of members of the Board of Trustees

No Trustees received any remuneration during the year (2021: £nil).

Two Trustees (2021: one) were reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and duties directly related to their duties as Trustees. Costs reimbursed were £126 (2021: £70).

## 10. Pensions

The Group provides defined contribution pension schemes for current employees.

In addition, the Group has ten employees who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The TPS is a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. Since the Group is unable to identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme, contributions to the TPS are accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

The Group participates in the Local Pensions Partnerships (LPP), formerly London Pension Fund Authority (LPFA), a scheme which provides benefits based on final pensionable pay in respect of employees' past service. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the participating employers and are mainly invested in equity investments and Government Securities. The most recent triennial actuarial valuation of the LPP was as at 31 March 2019.

In the year to 31 March 2022, the Group made payments under an agreed deficit reduction plan of £0.961 million (2021: £0.936 million). No deficit reduction payments were unpaid at 31 March 2022 (2021: £nil).

## 10. Pensions (continued)

Pension liabilities measured in accordance with FRS 102 were:

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
<b>LPP scheme</b>		
Market value of assets	51,114	44,237
Present value of liabilities	(51,863)	(54,143)
LPP scheme - net deficit	(749)	(9,906)
Present value of an unfunded pension obligation	(120)	(128)
<b>Net pension fund liabilities</b>	<b>(869)</b>	<b>(10,034)</b>

### Financial assumptions

The principal assumptions used to calculate LPP scheme liabilities were as follows:

	At 31 March 2022 % pa	At 31 March 2021 % pa
Rate of inflation – RPI	4.2	3.2
Rate of inflation – CPI	3.2	2.8
Rate of increase for pensions in payment	3.2	2.8
Discount rate	2.6	2.0

Life expectancy assumptions from age 65 were as follows:

	2022 Years	2021 Years
Retiring today		
- Men	22.0	21.9
- Women	23.9	23.8
Retiring in 20 years		
- Men	23.1	23.0
- Women	25.6	25.5

The post-retirement mortality assumptions are based on:

- 2022: The post-retirement mortality tables are constructed based on Club Vita analysis completed for the 2019 triennial valuation. These base tables are then projected using the CMI\_2020 Model allowing for a long-term rate of improvement of 1.25% p.a. The

CMI\_2021 model has not been used as it is not expected that this will have a significant effect on the value of the liabilities.

- 2021: The post-retirement mortality tables are constructed based on Club Vita analysis completed for the 2019 triennial valuation. These base tables are then projected using the CMI\_2020 Model, allowing for a long-term rate of improvement of 1.25% p.a.

## Scheme assets

The value of assets in the LPP attributable to the Group were:

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Equities	29,094	24,035
Target return funds	11,009	10,412
Infrastructure	5,207	3,749
Property	4,586	4,025
Cash	1,218	2,016
	<b>51,114</b>	<b>44,237</b>

Equity investments are in publicly quoted entities valued at their bid price at year end.

The investment return (on a bid value to bid value basis) achieved for the year to 31 March 2022 was 16.5% (2021: 15.6%).

## Reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>54,271</b>	45,214
Interest cost	1,072	1,048
Benefits paid	(1,293)	(1,249)
Experience gain/ (loss) on defined benefit obligation	158	(710)
Change in financial assumptions	(2,218)	10,444
Change in demographic assumptions	-	(469)
Unfunded pension payments	(7)	(7)
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>51,983</b>	54,271

## 10. Pensions (continued)

### Reconciliation of fair value of scheme assets

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>44,237</b>	38,602
Interest on assets	881	903
Return on assets in excess of assumed interest	6,386	5,095
Administration expenses	(58)	(50)
Contributions by the employer	968	943
Benefits paid	(1,300)	(1,256)
<b>Closing fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>51,114</b>	44,237

The following components of the pensions charge have been recognised as operating costs in the statement of financial activities:

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Net interest	191	145
Administration expenses	58	50
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>249</b>	195

### Re-measurements in other comprehensive income

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Return on fund assets in excess of assumption	6,386	5,095
Changes in demographic assumptions	-	469
Changes in financial assumptions	2,218	(10,444)
Experience (loss)/ gain on defined benefit obligation	(158)	710
<b>Total actuarial gain/ (loss) recognised</b>	<b>8,446</b>	(4,170)
Deficit reduction payments made	7	7
<b>Net actuarial gain/ (loss)</b>	<b>8,453</b>	(4,163)

## 10. Pensions (continued)

### Sensitivity analysis of scheme liabilities

The table below sets out the impact of changes in the discount rate assumed on the present value pension obligation and projected service cost and the impact of a one-year age rating adjustment to the mortality assumption.

	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1%	0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	51,038	51,983	52,946
Projected service cost	-	-	-
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	+1 year	None	-1 year
Present value of total obligation	54,293	51,983	49,774
Projected service cost	-	-	-

## 11. Tangible assets

Group	Freehold property £000s	Long leasehold improvements £000s	Short leasehold improvements £000s	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s	Motor vehicles £000s	Total £000s
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2021	24,769	3,887	3,646	17,605	3,577	53,484
Additions	2,138	-	336	1,757	250	4,481
Disposals	(575)	(44)	(47)	(498)	(359)	(1,523)
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>26,332</b>	<b>3,843</b>	<b>3,935</b>	<b>18,864</b>	<b>3,468</b>	<b>56,442</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2021	3,901	811	1,986	13,641	2,892	23,231
Charge for the year	490	62	249	1,579	339	2,719
Disposals	(96)	(8)	(36)	(455)	(355)	(950)
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>4,295</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>14,765</b>	<b>2,876</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>22,037</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>4,099</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>31,442</b>
At 31 March 2021	20,868	3,076	1,660	3,964	685	30,253
<b>Company</b>						
Company	Freehold property £000s	Long leasehold improvements £000s	Short leasehold improvements £000s	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s	Motor vehicles £000s	Total £000s
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2021	24,769	3,887	3,646	17,572	3,475	53,349
Additions	2,138	-	336	1,757	250	4,481
Disposals	(575)	(44)	(47)	(476)	(300)	(1,442)
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>26,332</b>	<b>3,843</b>	<b>3,935</b>	<b>18,853</b>	<b>3,425</b>	<b>56,388</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2021	3,901	811	1,986	13,618	2,844	23,160
Charge for the year	490	62	249	1,578	323	2,702
Disposals	(96)	(8)	(36)	(433)	(300)	(873)
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>4,295</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>14,763</b>	<b>2,867</b>	<b>24,989</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>22,037</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>1,736</b>	<b>4,090</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>31,399</b>
At 31 March 2021	20,868	3,076	1,660	3,954	631	30,189

## 12. Intangible assets

<b>Group</b>	<b>Negative goodwill £000s</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 April 2021	-
Additions	(1,173)
Disposals	-
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>(1,173)</b>
<b>Accumulated amortisation</b>	
At 1 April 2021	-
Charge for the year	(1,173)
Disposals	-
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>(1,173)</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>	
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>-</b>
At 31 March 2021	-

Negative goodwill arose on the acquisition of the assets and ongoing activity of Otterhayes Trust on 12 April 2021 and was fully amortised in the year.

## 13. Fixed Assets

<b>Group</b>	<b>2022 £000s</b>	2021 £000s
UK listed investments (at market value)	-	1
<b>Company</b>		
	<b>2022 £000s</b>	2021 £000s
Paid up shares: 100% (2021: 100%) holding in Helping Sense Limited	<b>30</b>	30

The company owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of Helping Sense Limited, which is incorporated in England and Wales, and exists to raise funds for the company. There is no readily available market value for the company and accordingly it is accounted for at cost.

The Trustees believe that the carrying value of the investment is supported by the underlying net assets (Note 30).

## 14. Debtors

<b>Group</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Trade debtors	<b>4,393</b>	4,360
Accrued income	<b>1,626</b>	1,430
Prepayments	<b>1,886</b>	2,401
Taxation recoverable	<b>306</b>	161
Other debtors	<b>607</b>	855
	<b>8,818</b>	9,207

<b>Company</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Trade debtors	<b>4,394</b>	4,360
Accrued income	<b>1,444</b>	1,232
Prepayments	<b>1,875</b>	2,390
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	140
Taxation recoverable	<b>306</b>	161
Other debtors	<b>493</b>	655
	<b>8,512</b>	8,938

Trade debtors are shown net of bad and doubtful debt provisions of £150,155 (2021: £197,738).

## 15. Current asset investments

<b>Group and Company</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank deposits	<b>4,000</b>	4,000

## 16. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	319	470
Trade creditors	2,390	1,681
Taxation and social security	863	711
Deferred income	1,058	1,002
Accruals and other creditors	4,130	5,062
	<b>8,760</b>	8,926

<b>Company</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	319	470
Trade creditors	2,390	1,675
Amounts owed to group undertakings	89	-
Taxation and social security	863	711
Deferred income	1,058	997
Accruals and other creditors	4,036	4,954
	<b>8,755</b>	8,807

## 17. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loan	5,333	7,873
Other creditors	32	40
	<b>5,365</b>	7,913

<b>Company</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loan	5,333	7,872

The bank loan, which funded the construction of TouchBase Pears, is from Lloyds Bank PLC. The loan is unsecured and repayable in instalments over 16 years to 2035. Interest was fixed on the first £7 million drawdown at 4.17% for the first eight years with the remaining amount drawn on a variable interest based on a margin of 2% above SONIA. During the year, Sense repaid £2.3m remaining on the variable rate element of the loan.



Repayments fall due as follows:

	2022	2021
	£000s	£000s
Within one year	319	470
Second to fifth year	2,126	2,005
After five years	3,207	5,867
	<b>5,652</b>	<b>8,342</b>

## 18. Movement of funds

Group	Balance at 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	28,238	77,839	(73,843)	(682)	31,552
Designated funds	10,538	39	(469)	989	11,097
Pension deficit (note 11)	(10,034)	-	9,165	-	(869)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>28,742</b>	<b>77,878</b>	<b>(65,147)</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>41,780</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cymru Fundraising Fund	23	4	-	-	27
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	-	26
Community Connections	108	-	(2)	-	106
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
Children's Services	125	95	-	(220)	-
Children's Services: South East	54	77	-	(73)	58
Sport England - Active Together	114	201	(346)	31	-
Arts and Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive	61	-	(60)	(1)	-
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	56	-	-	(27)	29
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	25	-	-	-	25
Cafe 55 - Providence Court	47	4	-	-	51
Big Lottery Fund Grant	62	135	(149)	-	48
Children's Services North	17	13	(1)	(29)	-
Cornwall GOT Project	38	1	(1)	-	38
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	1	-	-	108



<b>Group</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2021</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Northern Ireland Lottery guide dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	92	113	(110)	-	95
Northern Ireland Special Donations	132	40	(8)	-	164
Northern Ireland specialist services	31	-	-	-	31
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
The Devon Group Fund	1	3	(1)	30	33
Volunteering: London transitions	47	28	(74)	-	1
Wolverhampton Children's Services	35	-	(1)	-	34
Children's Services Midlands	6	29	(1)	(34)	-
DoH Health and Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
TouchBase Wales Lottery Grant	35	2	(34)	-	3
Woodside – Capital	33	10	-	-	43
NI Mallusk Nursery	26	1	(2)	-	25
GOT Group Warwickshire	36	-	(9)	-	27
Andlaw House	39	-	-	(30)	9
NI Outreach Worker	20	-	-	-	20
Woodside – Operations	43	21	-	-	64
Arts and Wellbeing: Digital Programme	28	-	(28)	-	-
Arts Council: TBP Studio Development	25	78	(15)	(88)	-
Grafton Street Donations	20	16	-	-	36
Holidays Fund	10	58	-	-	68
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	8	175	(183)	-	-
Children's Services East	4	35	(1)	(38)	-
Virtual Buddying	-	137	(137)	-	-
North Wales Donations	-	35	-	-	35
The Communication Consortium Grants Programme (funded by The Rayners Special Educational Trust)	-	29	(18)	-	11
TBP CSS Studio Development	-	41	-	(12)	29
Hadley Centre (Operations)	-	25	-	-	25
North Yorkshire Donations	-	40	-	-	40
Loughborough Hub Capital	-	200	-	-	200
Loughborough Hub Revenue	-	50	-	-	50
Other	542	205	(80)	(29)	638



Group	Balance at 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Sense International</b>					
Nelumbo Stiftung Education	207	364	(347)	-	224
Romania – In-country Income	101	74	(38)	-	137
FCDO UK Aid Match Kenya	86	-	(53)	-	33
Comic Relief Uganda	79	137	(136)	-	80
Nelumbo Stiftung Early Intervention Uganda	75	-	(45)	-	30
FCDO UK Aid Match Bangladesh	68	20	(24)	-	64
Latin American Children's Trust	61	6	(38)	-	29
Thomas Cook Children's Charity	60	-	(29)	-	31
NLCF Uganda	59	-	(59)	-	-
My Turn to Learn Appeal	58	48	(64)	-	42
Enabel Vocational	49	135	(184)	-	-
Tanzania Adults Vocational	45	52	(59)	-	38
Porticus Uganda 2020-21	35	-	(35)	-	-
Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa Uganda	29	4	(33)	-	-
The Batchworth Trust (Nepal)	24	-	-	-	24
FCDO UK Aid Direct Kenya Cofunding	-	23	(14)	-	9
Tanzania Early Intervention	21	19	(40)	-	-
Jersey Overseas Aid Nepal	17	93	(73)	-	37
Band Aid Uganda	18	7	(25)	-	-
Medicor	-	55	-	-	55
Latin American Children's Trust Peru 2021-24	-	55	(27)	-	28
UN Women Uganda	-	33	(27)	-	6
Help Uganda	-	65	(61)	-	4
FCDO UK Aid Direct Kenya	-	91	(91)	-	-
FCDO (UK Aid Match) Kenya Early Intervention	-	99	(99)	-	-
Tanzania Holding Fund	-	-	(72)	72	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	4	(104)	100	-
Kenya Holding Fund	-	1	(49)	48	-
Peru Holding Fund	-	1	(22)	22	1
Lavelle Peru	-	49	(16)	-	33
Other	98	224	(307)	(6)	9
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>(3,432)</b>	<b>(307)</b>	<b>3,285</b>



### Endowment

Property	369	-	(9)	-	360
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>32,550</b>	<b>81,463</b>	<b>(68,588)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,425</b>

Company	Balance at 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	28,184	73,707	(70,262)	(446)	31,183
Designated funds	10,538	39	(469)	989	11,097
Pension deficit (note 11)	(10,034)	-	9,165	-	(869)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>28,688</b>	<b>73,746</b>	<b>(61,566)</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>41,411</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cymru Fundraising Fund	23	4	-	-	27
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	-	26
Community Connections	108	-	(2)	-	106
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	23	1	-	-	24
Children's Services	125	95	-	(220)	-
Children's Services: South East	54	77	-	(73)	58
Sport England - Active Together	114	201	(346)	31	-
Arts and Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive	61	-	(60)	(1)	-
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	56	-	-	(27)	29
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	25	-	-	-	25
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	47	4	-	-	51
Big Lottery Fund Grant	62	135	(149)	-	48
Children's Services North	17	13	(1)	(29)	-
Cornwall GOT Project	38	1	(1)	-	38
Needs and Numbers Survey	55	-	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	107	1	-	-	108



<b>Company</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2021</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>
	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
Northern Ireland Lottery guide dogs	64	-	-	-	64
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	92	113	(110)	-	95
Northern Ireland Special Donations	132	40	(8)	-	164
Northern Ireland specialist services	31	-	-	-	31
Stevenage Special Donations	31	-	-	-	31
The Devon Group Fund	1	3	(1)	30	33
Volunteering: London transitions	47	28	(74)	-	1
Wolverhampton Children's Services	35	-	(1)	-	34
Children's Services Midlands	6	29	(1)	(34)	-
DoH Health and Wellbeing Alliance	-	23	-	(23)	-
TouchBase Wales Lottery Grant	35	2	(34)	-	3
Woodside – Capital	33	10	-	-	43
NI Mallusk Nursery	26	1	(2)	-	25
GOT Group Warwickshire	36	-	(9)	-	27
Andlaw House	39	-	-	(30)	9
NI Outreach Worker	20	-	-	-	20
Woodside – Operations	43	21	-	-	64
Arts and Wellbeing: Digital Programme	28	-	(28)	-	-
Arts Council: TBP Studio Development	25	78	(15)	(88)	-
Grafton Street Donations	20	16	-	-	36
Holidays Fund	10	58	-	-	68
Pears Grant - Promoting Wellbeing	8	175	(183)	-	-
Children's Services East	4	35	(1)	(38)	-
Virtual Buddying	-	137	(137)	-	-
North Wales Donations	-	35	-	-	35
The Communication Consortium Grants Programme (funded by The Rayners Special Educational Trust)	-	29	(18)	-	11
TBP CSS Studio Development	-	41	-	(12)	29
Hadley Centre (Operations)	-	25	-	-	25
North Yorkshire Donations	-	40	-	-	40
Loughborough Hub Capital	-	200	-	-	200
Loughborough Hub Revenue	-	50	-	-	50
Other	542	205	(80)	(29)	638
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>(1,261)</b>	<b>(543)</b>	<b>2,371</b>



<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	370	-	(10)	-	360
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>31,307</b>	<b>75,672</b>	<b>(62,837)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44,142</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £20,000. 'Other funds' are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £20,000.

## Unrestricted funds

### General fund

This represents the accumulated reserves of the charity that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees.

### Designated funds

Designated funds total £11.1m (2021: £10.5m).

Designated funds include £3.8 million for the maintenance and improvement of the Group's residential accommodation, two years of contributions to Sense International (£0.5m) and £1.0m covering the next year of pension deficit reduction payments. This year we have designated funds to support employees through a mid-year pay increment in response to the national cost of living crisis.

Various future strategic plans will be funded from reserves. Trustees have therefore designated £5.0m for the following projects:

- £1.5m for investment in the current financial year on innovation projects.
- £1.5m for investment in energy efficiency improvements centred on our buildings.
- £1.0m for digital development.
- £1.0m to further progress the Hubs development programme.

### Pension deficit

See note 11 for the calculation of the estimated deficit on the defined benefit scheme.



## Restricted funds

Sense is reliant on the support of individuals, corporations, trusts, other charities and state bodies in order to deliver our activities. Monies that are received for an express purpose are restricted to that purpose.

The principal restricted funds are considered to be:

### **Community Connections**

A legacy to reduce social isolation for adults with sensory impairments, connect people in Wales to their local community, to build connections with others, share experiences, improve confidence and well-being.

### **Sport England**

A three-year project to build on our foundations of supporting people with complex disabilities to get active.

### **Children's Services**

Money donated to support Children and Young People who are Deafblind/multi-sensory impaired.

### **Northern Ireland Day centre**

Commissioned day service opportunities for adults with complex needs.

### **Northern Ireland Special Donations**

An accumulation of donations / fundraised funds raised locally for services in Northern Ireland.

### **Loughborough Hub Capital**

A project to redesign and improve Sense College Loughborough's building in order to improve on energy efficiency and extend service provisions to the general community.



### **The Nelumbo Stiftung Education Fund**

This fund comprises donations from Nelumbo Stiftung for an ongoing education project being implemented across all the countries in which Sense International operates.

### **The Romania in-country income Fund**

This fund comprises funds that are raised by Sense International Romania for use in Romania.

### **Endowment funds**

These are properties given to the charity for its use. The movement on the fund represents the depreciation charge in the year.

### **Transfers between funds**

Other transfers between funds represent either transfers from unrestricted funds to cover shortfalls of restricted funds or transfers from restricted funds to cover related expenditure paid by unrestricted monies.



## 19. Analysis of net assets between fund balances

Group	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	31,082	-	-	360	31,442
Net current assets	5,835	11,097	3,285	-	20,217
Long-term liabilities	(5,365)	-	-	-	(5,365)
Pension liability	(869)	-	-	-	(869)
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,683</b>	<b>11,097</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>45,425</b>

Company	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	31,039	-	-	360	31,399
Fixed asset investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	5,447	11,097	2,371	-	18,915
Long-term liabilities	(5,333)	-	-	-	(5,333)
Pension liability	(869)	-	-	-	(869)
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,314</b>	<b>11,097</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>44,142</b>

## 20. Capital commitments

The Group had capital commitments of £364,900 (2021: £5,689).

## 21. Contingent liabilities

Sense, Sense International and Helping Sense Limited are members of a group VAT registration.

Under the Value Added Tax Act 1983, all members of a VAT group are jointly and severally liable for any tax due during the period of their membership.

As disclosed in Note 29, two of the Company's subsidiaries, Helping Sense Limited and Sense4Enterprise Limited, have taken advantage of the exemption available under Section 479 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the requirement for audit. As a condition of the exemption, the Company has guaranteed the year-end liabilities of the relevant subsidiaries until they are settled in full. The liabilities of one of the subsidiaries



(Sense4Enterprise Limited) at the year-end were £121,092 (2021: £107,000). The Trustees are satisfied that this does not impact on the going concern position of the Group and believe that this is an accurate and robust guarantee. The other subsidiary (Helping Sense Limited) had assets of £217,402 (2021: £30,000) at 31 March.

## 22. Operating lease commitments

Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

Group and Company	2022		2021	
	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s
Operating leases which expire:				
Within one year	2,760	-	3,132	-
In two to five years	8,680	-	9,329	-
After five years	6,574	-	6,385	-
	<b>18,014</b>	-	18,846	-

## 23. Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities

	2022 £000s	2021 £000s
Net income before pension revaluations	4,422	5,050
Defined benefit pension scheme deficit reduction payments	(712)	(741)
Investment income received	(29)	(125)
Interest paid	269	310
Depreciation	2,720	2,799
Amortisation of negative goodwill	(1,173)	-
Profit on sale of fixed assets	(117)	(155)
Increase in stock	(75)	(29)
Decrease in debtors	389	589
(Decrease)/ increase in creditors	(23)	2,436
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>5,671</b>	<b>10,134</b>



## 24. Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Increase in cash in the year	122	7,433
Bank loan repayments	2,690	459
<b>Changes generated from cash flows</b>	<b>2,812</b>	<b>7,892</b>
Net cash at start of year	11,244	3,352
<b>Net cash at end of year</b>	<b>14,056</b>	<b>11,244</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2021	Cash flows	Non-cash changes	At 31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cash at bank and in hand	15,586	122	-	15,708
Current asset investments	4,000	-	-	4,000
Debt due within one year	(470)	-	151	(319)
Debt due after one year	(7,872)	2,690	(151)	(5,333)
	11,244	2,812	-	14,056

## 26. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	15,708	15,586
Current asset investments	4,000	4,000
	<b>19,708</b>	19,586



## 27. Related party transactions

In some cases, the Group provides services to children or family members of the Trustees and Board members of the charity. These services are provided as part of the contracts agreed with funding authorities on the same commercial terms as with any other service user.

Balances with subsidiaries are disclosed below:

	31 March 2022 Debtor/(Creditor) £	31 March 2021 Debtor/(Creditor) £
Sense International	7,807	36,536
Helping Sense Limited	(217,402)	(31)
Sense4Enterprise Limited	121,092	107,541

### Support for Sense International

During the year, the company made a donation of £350,000 (2021: £350,000) to Sense International.

## 28. Company status

Sense is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

The liability of the members is limited by guarantee.

The members have undertaken to contribute such amount not exceeding one pound each as may be required in the event of the charity being wound up.

## 29. Subsidiary companies

Sense is connected to the Royal Coventry Society for the Blind. In a letter dated 04 June 2003 the Charity Commissioners directed that this Charity should be reported as part of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. There have been no activities separately undertaken by this Charity.



The company has three wholly owned subsidiaries including Sense International which is registered in England as a charity (charity number: 1076497) and is a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986).

Sense International has similar aims and objectives to the company. All activities have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis into the statement of financial activities.

A summary of the results of Sense International are shown below:

### Sense International

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Income	<b>2,533</b>	2,320
Expenditure	<b>(2,564)</b>	(2,455)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(31)</b>	(135)
Assets	<b>1,352</b>	1,439
Liabilities	<b>(135)</b>	(191)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,217</b>	1,248

In addition, Sense has two wholly owned subsidiaries that are not registered charities.

Helping Sense Limited (company number: 2214430) a company registered in England that is used for non-primary purpose trading activities, namely the support of shop sales of purchased goods and the organisation of fundraising activities. The net profit of the subsidiary is gifted to the company.

Sense4Enterprise Limited (company number: 8112973) a company limited by guarantee and a social enterprise and is used for income generating activities related to Sense TouchBase Pears and other resources. The net profit of Sense4Enterprise Limited is gifted to the charity.



A summary of the results of these subsidiaries is shown below:

### Helping Sense Limited

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Turnover	<b>3,862</b>	1,273
Cost of sales	<b>(622)</b>	(306)
Gross profit	<b>3,240</b>	967
Operating expenses	<b>(3,052)</b>	(967)
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>188</b>	-
Assets	<b>217</b>	35
Liabilities	-	(5)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>217</b>	30

### Sense4Enterprise Limited

	<b>2021</b>	2021
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Income	<b>74</b>	124
Expenditure	<b>(87)</b>	(137)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(13)</b>	(13)
Assets		-
Liabilities	<b>(121)</b>	(107)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>(121)</b>	(107)

The Company has guaranteed the liabilities of Sense4Enterprise Limited and Helping Sense Limited to entitle them to exemption from audit under Section 479A of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the year ended 31 March 2022.



## Other information

### Major supporters of Sense in 2021/22

- Audrey Earle Charitable Trust
- B&Q Foundation
- Communication Consortium
- Co-operative Group
- Fairfield Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- GMC Trust
- Hollyhock Charitable Foundation
- John Crabtree
- Margaret Giffen Charitable Trust
- Mondelez International
- Pears Foundation
- Peter and Frances Meyer
- Rob Lloyd
- Screwfix Foundation
- Severn Trent
- Severn Trent Community Foundation
- Sir David Dangoor
- Smith Charitable Trust
- Thames Water
- The Alan Edward Higgs Charity
- The Annette Duvollet Trust
- The Blair Foundation
- The Canbrick Charitable Trust



- The Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust
- The City Bridge Trust
- The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
- The Grey Court Trust
- The Hadley Trust
- The Halbard Charitable Trust
- The Lord Cozens-Hardy Trust
- The Lord Levy
- The Noel Sweeney Foundation
- The P F Charitable Trust
- The Patrick and Helena Frost Foundation
- The Peacock Charitable Trust
- The Princess Anne's Charities Trust
- The Roselands Trust
- The Simon Gibson Charitable Trust
- The Thomas J Horne Memorial Trust
- Thomas Pocklington Trust
- The Vision Foundation
- The Welland Charitable Trust
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Worth Waynflete Charitable Trust



## Charity information and professional advisers

### Registered address - Sense and Sense International

101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG

Tel: 0300 330 9250

Email: [facilities@sense.org.uk](mailto:facilities@sense.org.uk)

Websites: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

<https://www.senseinternational.org.uk>

### Sense Information and Advice

For details about the support and services Sense offers – and information about complex disabilities – please contact the Sense Information and Advice service on:

Tel: 0300 330 9256

Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

### Sense Northern Ireland

Sense Family Centre

The Manor House

51 Mallusk Road

Newtownabbey

County Antrim, BT36 4RU

Tel/text: 028 9083 3430

Email: [nienquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:nienquiries@sense.org.uk)

### Sense Cymru

TouchBase Wales

Caerphilly Business Park

Van Road

Caerphilly, CF83 3ED



Ffôn/tel: 0300 330 9280

Testud/text: 0300 330 9282

Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)

**Sense:** Registered number 1825301

**Registered charity number** 289868

## Professional advisers

### Independent auditors

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

One Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3AX

### Bankers

National Westminster Bank PLC

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JA

Lloyds Banking Group plc

33 Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1HZ

### Solicitors

Wilson's Solicitors LLP

Alexandra House, St John Street

Salisbury SP1 2SB

Trowers & Hamlins LLP

3 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8YZ

### Insurance advisers

Willis Towers Watson

8 First Street, Floor 6

Manchester, England M15 4RP

**SENSE, THE NATIONAL DEAFBLIND AND RUBELLA ASSOCIATION**

England & Wales - Charity number 289868

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# Accounts

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# Sense Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021

## **Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association:**

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association (Sense), Sense International and Helping Sense Limited

Sense: Registered number 1825301

Registered charity number 289868

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## From our President

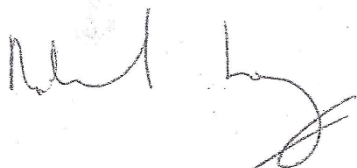
Over the last financial year Sense has continued to offer much-needed services to children, adults and families with disabilities, for whom the pandemic has been extremely difficult and challenging.

We know that this pandemic has impacted on those who already struggle the most. We are painfully aware of families with disabled sons or daughters struggling at home; the adults we support with additional health conditions; explaining to someone in our homes why they can't go to the park or see their family; disabled people experiencing loneliness every day.

We know that need has increased during this period and there has been a great impact on the children, adults and families that we support. We have kept the people we support safe throughout the last eighteen months. We have developed new forms of virtual support. We have also embraced new ways of supporting each other. We have shared this with our supporters, who have responded so generously to our COVID-19 emergency appeal.

I believe that change and innovation can follow periods of crisis like this as we collectively start to rebuild. Sense has taken the time to look at its strategy and has explored how we can increase our reach and impact in the next period, whilst learning the lessons from the pandemic. It is rooted in the hopes and aspirations of the children, adults and families we support. It sets Sense on a path of growth, to build our capacity to develop new and innovative services and to make a tangible difference in the communities in which we operate.

Thank you.



**The Lord Levy**

President

## Introduction from the Chair and the Chief Executive

What marks COVID-19 out from other crises that we may have experienced is that it has been systemic. Almost nothing has been left untouched by it. Our home lives and work lives have converged and our personal and professional concerns have often become one and the same. It has also become the catalyst of what will be one of the most challenging economic environments most of us have ever had to work in.

That is why we have been so humbled and amazed on a daily basis by the determined resilience and creativity of our staff and volunteers and the people we support and their families. We have been delivering high-quality and safe services during this time and the support we have provided has been incredible. We have been forced to rewrite our approach to supporting adults in our accommodation services and moved many of our other services online. We have seen greater collaboration between our teams, bringing together specialist skills from different areas of the organisation, moving staff online, and supporting people in new and innovative ways.

At a time when the world is changing so quickly and life has been altered, we have done so much. We launched a new supporter engagement campaign, Sense Sign School, and new virtual events and products – not only did that give us a welcome break from the doom and gloom, but it also gave us reassurances that despite current adversity, we are moving forward and doing new things.

However, we know that many individuals that Sense supports remain vulnerable to the long-term fallout from the COVID-19 crisis so, we will campaign and engage with government to help ensure their needs are met.

The new *National Disability Strategy* is a start in addressing the inequalities that disabled people face every day, but it isn't going to deliver the transformational change needed for disabled people. It doesn't champion the case for more investment in social care, nor how to tackle health inequalities or provide additional support services, such as short breaks for disabled children and their families. We will push government to ensure that disabled people are at the heart of their new strategy and as it progresses, we want to see clear channels for disabled people to be part of a continuing dialogue and when necessary are able to hold government to account.

**Dr Justin Molloy** - Chair of Sense



**Richard Kramer** Chief Executive, Sense & Sense International



## **Report of the Trustees of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (including the Director's Report)**

### **Sense – Who We Are**

Sense is a national disability charity that supports children and adults who are deafblind or have complex disabilities to communicate, experience the world, and fulfil their potential. We also have an international arm, Sense International, which works in eight countries round the world.

Sense offers personalised support in our residential and supported living services; in the community and across our centres, holidays and short breaks; and provide opportunities for children and adults to take part in arts and sport activities across the country.

We are here for everyone who needs us, for as long as they need us, providing early intervention for children, helping young people access education, and supporting the transition into adulthood and beyond. As well as providing practical support, we also offer information to families and we campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

We work with a range of partners to deliver our services, including local authorities, housing associations, healthcare professionals, schools, and art and sport organisations.

Some of our services are funded by Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) whilst others, such as our specialist work with children and young people, are entirely dependent on charitable fundraising and income from trading through our 115 shops.

All of our different services are tailored to the needs of each individual.

### **Sense's mission**

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.

## **What we believe**

Our vision is of a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

## **What we do**

We provide expert support that's tailored to the individual needs of each person who has complex disabilities or is deafblind. That might be through our centres, holidays and short breaks, or in people's homes. In addition to practical support, we also offer information to families, and campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

## **Who we support**

We are here for every person living with complex disabilities\* that make it a challenge to communicate, access information and take part in life.

We are specialists in providing the individual, tailored support people need to lead a fulfilling life.

\*Complex disabilities – or complex needs – are descriptions used for a person who lives with two or more disabilities and requires high levels of support with aspects of their daily life.

## **How we support**

We know that, with the right support, it is possible for every person to make sense of their world and the world around them, no matter how complex their disabilities.

We help people to communicate and express themselves – be it through speech or sign, touch or movement, gesture or sound, art or dance.

For 66 years, Sense has developed an unrivalled depth of knowledge, skill and expertise to help people overcome the barriers to communication. We help people develop the skills to enjoy everyday things like having a conversation, enjoying friendships and living independently.

We offer personalised and flexible services that are built around the specific needs of each individual. That means we support people in their home and in the community, in their

education and transition to adulthood, and through our holidays, arts, sports and wellbeing programmes.

We also offer practical support to families, including information, advice, short breaks and family events.

We campaign to change laws and government policies where necessary to ensure that everyone, no matter how complex their disabilities, can communicate, access information, and take part in life.

## **A Brief Overview of Sense Services**

We reach 13,000 children who are deafblind or have complex needs and their families each year

We support almost 3,000 children through our specialist and operational services

We support 335 people in our accommodation services in our 71 registered care services and 23 supported living services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

112 children and young people attended our GOT (Get Out There) groups in 5 areas of England. The groups are a combination of local authority commissioned services and charitably funded activities.

We support 674 people through our day services, attending our 9 resource centres, or using Communicator Guides, Interveners and other community services.

There are 226 people receiving services through our nine college sites, 117 of them supported by social care funding and 109 through Education funding.

94% of our services are judged by CQC to be good or outstanding.

We supported 3,042 number of people through our information and advice line last year.

Nearly 6,000 people have benefitted from support through our Sense Connect services designed to tackle loneliness and social isolation and almost 5,000 took part in our Arts, Sport and Well-being programmes.

902,000 customers visited our 115 shops in the five months they were open last year.

Our Policy Team engaged with civil servants and government ministers to champion the needs of people with complex disabilities, from a position of being a social care provider able to directly represent them.

We kept the experiences of families and disabled people in the media, and ran 2 campaigns; the 'Forgotten Families' campaign highlighted the experience of families caring for adults, and the impact of cuts to services, while the 'Left Out of Life' campaign aimed to tackle isolation and loneliness amongst disabled people.

## Managing through the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted and added to the inequalities that disabled people face. Many disabled people have told us that they feel forgotten, that their lives are seen as being of less value and that their communities have closed up to them.

The pandemic has been incredibly difficult for disabled people in so many ways. Inequalities include inaccessible information, lack of access to supermarkets and online delivery slots, the impact on mental health and barriers to social care. For many disabled people, their support has been reduced during the pandemic and this doesn't reflect the risk and impact of the virus - disabled people make up six out of ten of all COVID-19 deaths.

Most of the children and adults we work with use sign language, gestures and touch to communicate. They need expert support to express themselves, and they have been hard hit by lockdown and social distancing. Families have felt exhausted as they have cared for their children without the informal and formal support they need. Children have missed vital therapies and other support.

Social care providers have faced huge challenges in responding to COVID-19. Front line workers have not been sufficiently recognised. Obtaining PPE has been fraught. Getting testing for staff has been a struggle.

In response to COVID-19, Sense acted quickly to protect disabled people, staff, volunteers and the public. We put plans in place to protect our frontline workers, shut our offices, and moved to homeworking wherever possible. We closed all our charity shops, cancelled major fundraising events and closed our Family Centres, Colleges and Day Centres. We also stopped face-to-face Buddying sessions, postponed our Holiday programme, and moved as much of our support as possible online.

At very short notice, our services developed new procedures and ways of working. We looked at how they work with others and how people we care for could stay in touch with family and friends. In our accommodation services, our overwhelming priority was to keep the people we support as safe and as well protected from the virus as we could. In order to limit the number of staff going in, they worked longer hours and the use of agencies was minimised.

Sense frontline staff continued to provide expert care throughout, but the loss of structure and routine is a major challenge for the people we support. Social and community links vanished overnight and, as a result, we've seen an increase in peoples' anxiety and distress. PPE presented significant challenges for disabled people who lip read or use facial expressions to communicate. Many activities for people in accommodation needed to be re-thought due to lockdown, as external contact was so limited. There are lots of examples of activities provided remotely, including seated yoga, drumming to music, exercise through dance.

Sense put in place a suite of virtual sessions alongside our regular phone and email contact. We hosted groups and events online, and membership of our private Facebook group for parents and carers doubled and became a one-stop-shop for information and advice.

Our teams collaborated in new ways to make sure that people with complex disabilities can keep doing the things that matter to them. We set up Buddying sessions for young people on Zoom, sent out art boxes and sensory packs by post, and created an online timetable of accessible activities for Sense support workers to use. We've also created a virtual Befriending Service led by trained volunteers to help disabled people feel less lonely.

We have raised our profile in the press with hard hitting campaigns including our 'Forgotten Families' campaign and 'Left out of Life' which highlighted the impact of loneliness on disabled people.

Our Events Team responded at pace to launch new virtual events, and in June we launched our own Emergency Appeal, which has performed well.

Sense staff have shown remarkable creativity and resilience to make all this happen. And working in this way is teaching us new things and allowing us to reach more people and tackle some of the barriers we often face, so online services will form part of how we deliver our services from now on.

## Our Four Strategic Outcomes

**Our Strategy – No One Left Out of Life - has four strategic outcomes. These four brief stories about the people we work with, illustrate some of the ways in which we are able to support people.**

### **Outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start**

#### **Zach and Luca's Story**

Zachary has always been amazing with his little brother, Luca. As a mother, I couldn't be prouder of him, but I always felt a pang of guilt that I could never spend as much time with him as I do with Luca.

Luca was born with CHARGE syndrome which is a rare genetic condition that affects his vision, hearing, and balance. Sense and other organisations have been there for Luca, but it always left me wondering, who's there for Zach?

The first lockdown was very upsetting for Zach as all the things that he relied on for his own well-being had been taken away. When Sense called to offer online sessions particularly for the siblings of people with complex disabilities, we snapped up the opportunity.

Sense is the only organisation to provide specific support for Zach as a sibling, through their Sense Connect programme. He can be quite shy and doesn't really talk a lot, so we were nervous about how he would take to the sessions.

Speaking to the other siblings has given him so much confidence to honestly express how he feels. No matter how caring his other friends are, speaking to peers in the same situation as himself really opened his eyes. It really struck us when, one day, he said that he felt sad that he would never be able to talk or play football with his brother. This took us by surprise, but we reassured him that it's OK to feel sad. It's important for him to know that it is not a negative thing to talk about Luca.

That moment alone filled him with so much confidence. Now, he chats with us and other people. My boys mean the absolute world to me, and I love them both equally. The love they have for each other fills my days with wonder and hope. Having Sense and the other siblings there for Zach has changed him profoundly and helped me feel less guilty about the time I spend with him.

### **Faye, Luca and Zac's mum**

## **Outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

### **Fernando's Story**

Fernando had lost the spark that made him so bright before Sense got involved. His spirit had died down. Growing up, I looked up to him as my older brother. He was so full of confidence that seemed to disappear as his vision and hearing started to go.

When he was born, the doctors thought that he was fine and sent him home with our mum. Having already had children, she could see that Fernando was different and it wasn't until he was about one that the doctors recognised that he had a disability. But they couldn't give a diagnosis. Our mother was pregnant with me at the time, and they encouraged her to terminate the pregnancy. Thankfully, they didn't.

Having sisters and a brother around him encouraged Fernando to try new things no matter what anyone might say. He loved working out and riding his bike. After school, he got a job where he worked for over 20 years. But we could all see that his vision, hearing and mobility were deteriorating, and he had to stop working. As the years went on, he became more and more withdrawn.

Spending time at a Sense Centre has been the best thing for Fernando. At home, communication can be a struggle but, there, he's in an environment where he can communicate fluently. He started to shine again!

When lockdown hit and that was taken away from him, we all really struggled. He started to spend more time in his room and not want to interact. The Sense staff were fantastic and arranged visits to see him and speak to him. We don't know what we would have done without that. Now he's back at the centre and he is as happy as ever. The only difficulty is explaining why he can't go seven days a week!

### **Carole, Fernando's sister**

## **Outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected with their communities**

### **Natalie's Story**

My name is Natalie. I am 38 years old and the mother of two girls.

I also have Usher syndrome, a condition that means I am deaf and visually impaired.

We're all likely to experience loneliness at some point in our lives. But having a disability means that you are more likely to be lonely.

The causes of loneliness among disabled people are complex. But they all stem from one thing – a sense of disconnection. When I received my diagnosis through the post, I immediately felt disconnected from my friends, family, and the world I knew. A ray of hope came when my Sense Communicator Guide put me in touch with Lianne, who had also just been diagnosed with Usher. Speaking to someone who understood was a major turning point and we are now the best of friends.

During the pandemic, local community groups have been closed and the places I used to feel relatively comfortable going to are no longer there. The safety measures that have been introduced have also made life more challenging.

I have enjoyed going out for walks with my baby in her pushchair, but I find it difficult to maintain the two-metre distance with other people in the street because of my vision. It

makes me so scared of hitting someone or bumping into anyone and I am worried that in doing so I will hurt myself, my baby or other people.

Thanks to Sense's campaigning work, I have been able to share my story with the nation in the hope that people understand the difficulties of disabled people and want to change the world for the better. None of us want to feel like a burden and a little understanding goes a long way.

#### **Outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action**

##### **A close shave**

Not one, but two people raised more than £1,000 by having a very close shave.

December saw David Ashdown, an HGV driver from Bedworth shaving off his Santa beard and hair.

David had been growing his beard and hair since last March with the plan to shave it off just before Christmas to raise money for Sense. He has been named by his friends and family as Bedworth town's very own Santa Claus.

David is an avid angler and well known in the local community. He has received support from Lanes Fishing Tackle shop and fellow anglers in the area. The big shave was held, following social distancing guidelines, at Max Cuts Barbers in the town, with his family there to support him.

David has been supporting Sense for years and was motivated to do the festive fundraising challenge after learning more about the disproportional impact the pandemic has had on disabled people and their families.

David said: "I wanted to put a smile on everyone's faces for Christmas after what has been a dismal year. I've had great support from Lanes Fishing Tackle and other anglers and really want to raise as much as possible for this amazing charity."

In January, Helen Jones shaved her head. She was inspired to take on the challenge for Sense because of her own experience with hearing loss and as a Cochlear Implant wearer.

She says the challenge was to develop her confidence in showing off her implant.

She said: "I felt confident about the head shave. The challenge for me is having my Cochlear Implant on show."

Helen began to slowly lose her hearing sixteen years ago and was fitted with a bone-anchoring hearing aid, called a Cochlear Implant, after several operations.

Over the years she has experienced times of isolation and feelings of vulnerability which resulted in her often hiding her Cochlear Implant which is visible on the side of her head.

Lockdown, and hearing other disabled people's experiences of isolation, inspired her to take on this challenge and fundraise to support the work of Sense.

We are very grateful to David and Helen, and to everyone who takes action to raise money for, or support Sense in other ways.

## Quality and Safeguarding

We have continued to maintain the highest levels of quality and safety of our services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had to adapt our approaches to quality assurance and respond to the challenges presented by the pandemic. We have ensured that the health and safety measures, infection control arrangements and necessary restrictions imposed by government have been introduced to keep the people we support, their families and our staff safe.

We have continued to provide services of the highest quality, as recognised by our regulators, with 94% of our services registered with the Care Quality Commission in England rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. We also provided high levels of assurance to

regulators on our response to the pandemic, through their Emergency Support Framework and targeted Infection, Prevention and Control inspections.

We developed new virtual approaches to reviewing the quality of our services and our independently chaired Quality Board has continued to meet to monitor quality and compliance throughout the pandemic. The Board has recognised the outstanding work of our frontline staff in keeping people safe and continuing to provide high quality, person centred support; the Board also recognised the strength of leadership and management of the organisation in responding to the situation.

Safeguarding has continued to be a priority for Sense and the pandemic has presented additional challenges about how we respond to concerns about safety and potential abuse. Our Safeguarding Board has continued to meet to review our policies and procedures; and to provide assurance on our response to safeguarding incidents.

We have maintained high levels of training and awareness of safeguarding for our staff and volunteers, in addition to developing accessible and easy read information for the people we support to keep themselves safe and report concerns.

Our Working Together for Change approach of listening to the experiences of the people we support and using this information to improve our services, continues to be embedded and rolled out across the organisation. An example of this is the new easy read policies which have been produced to enable people to understand their own health needs; and we have also developed improved training and resources on identity, sexuality and relationships.

## Fundraising

Sense is funded not only by contracted services, but also by fundraising which provides our charitable services.

This has been a year like no other for the people we support and the supporters who make our work possible. We would like to thank everyone that has supported Sense, giving their time, money and voice to our vital work. This has been a critical time for Sense and the

people we work with, many of whom have been and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic.

People's enormous generosity through this time meant that we raised over £9.59million for the work of Sense and Sense International. **We want to thank everyone for your great generosity.**

- That includes almost £4.1million received from 177 supporters who made the very special decision to remember Sense in their wills. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and thanks to their loved ones.
- We engaged with more than 833 groups, companies and individuals to raise funds and awareness of Sense's vital work, in local communities across the country.
- Support from Sense's individual supporters and the public for our Emergency Appeal during Spring and Summer 2020, raised an amazing £793,000!
- Our 2020 Supporter Christmas Appeal, which featured a story of nine-year old Bethany who has CHARGE Syndrome and is supported by Sense Children's Services, raised more funds than ever before, with the total of £483,000.
- In total, the support from individuals to Sense's Christmas activities totalled nearly £800,000, as well as gaining support from 23,000 new donors responding across our mailed appeals and television activity.

We're extremely grateful to all the Trusts, Foundations, Businesses and Statutory partners who have shown that they care deeply about the impact of the pandemic on people with complex disabilities, their families, and everyone who works and volunteers at Sense.

With emergency funding streams being announced almost daily, we worked at pace to help leading grant makers understand the threats posed by COVID-19 and the difference we could make by working together.

The fundraising team submitted more than 500 requests for support and secured an unprecedented £3.1m, which meant that Sense could mitigate some of the worst impacts of the pandemic: avoiding redundancies, bringing back specialist staff from

Furlough, tackling loneliness, investing in arts and sports activities, and supporting the wellbeing of our frontline workers.

We're proud to recognise and thank our major supporters on pages 108 - 111 of this report. We look forward to working with all our partners and new supporters in the coming year, to take more action and help people with complex disabilities to thrive.

### **Our commitment to fundraise responsibly**

We are committed to follow best practice in fundraising and marketing. We are members of the Institute of Fundraising and registered with the Fundraising Regulator whose Code of Practice we follow.

Maintaining the trust of our supporters is critical – that is why honesty and transparency is at the heart of everything we do.

We adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements and ensure that our policies, guidelines and processes are regularly reviewed. We have very strict guidelines about fundraising from vulnerable people and we never put pressure on anyone to donate.

In 2020/21 Sense worked with four professional fundraisers to support our fundraising. We closely monitor our supplier partners and those that fundraise on our behalf, to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We work extremely hard to ensure supporters and the public have a positive experience of Sense, but we do not always get it right and we take all complaints and concerns seriously and value your feedback. You can find our complaints policy on the Sense website.

Over the last year the Supporter Services Team received 49 complaints. We always respond quickly to requests to change the way in which we contact people and ensure that we manage our supporters' personal details in a respectful and secure manner. We also review our data management procedures on a regular basis.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator to ensure that we are transparent, respectful and that we champion best practice and adhere to regulation. During the reporting period, Sense received 65 requests through the Fundraising Preference Service

asking us not to send fundraising requests. No complaints were made to the Fundraising Regulator about Sense during this period.

If you would like to talk to us about fundraising, please contact our Sense Supporter Services Team on [supporterservices@sense.org.uk](mailto:supporterservices@sense.org.uk) or 0300 330 9257.

## Our Volunteers

We have been supported by more than 1,400 volunteers across 2020/21. We have been very thankful for the great contributions which they have made to Sense.

There has been a decrease in the number of volunteers supporting Sense this year because of the closure of our shops during the pandemic. At the same time, we created new opportunities for volunteers to get involved, such as our Virtual Buddying service, which matches a disabled person with a volunteer to socialise online, creating friendships to tackle social isolation and loneliness. Other volunteers have adapted the way in which they provide support; turning their hand from face-to-face activities to virtual activities, continuing to provide vital support to those who need it.

Our dedicated volunteers, who help in our charity shops across England and Wales, have continued to support us whilst our shops closed and re-opened three times over last year. Volunteers in our Sense shops and through community fundraising activities have continued to raise crucial funds, support our engagement activities in local communities, build relationships and increase awareness of the work that Sense does and the difference we make.

We are hugely grateful to every person who gives their time, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm to make a difference. Seeing how our volunteers have continued to support us over the last year has been inspiring. **Thank you!**

## Our People

Our staff have gone to incredible lengths this year to keep the people we support safe from Coronavirus. There have been many stories of personal sacrifice – in some instances

managers and staff moved into accommodation-based services for extended periods, so that they could help reduce the risk of COVID-19 for vulnerable people with complex communication needs.

We are so very proud of everyone who has worked so hard for Sense this year.

**Our key achievements this year:**

**A focus on staff wellbeing:** we put considerable energy into supporting the individual and collective wellbeing of our staff across Sense. We delivered workshops and drop-6in sessions that reached over 1,500 staff, and included support around building resilience, avoiding burnout and helping staff working at home to feel less isolated.

Sense launched a new initiative, Sense Gigs, which brought together different staff across Sense to hear motivating external speakers, and to collectively look outwards, during this extended pandemic.

**A focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, Sense held two all-staff events attended by 500 staff across both sessions. We spoke in an open and honest way about our thoughts and feelings and experiences of racism. We developed an anti-racism plan in response to the death of George Floyd and the need to address the racism facing the Black Community, which also applies to Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities.

We created a dedicated role of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, who has helped us to develop and take forward our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. This was launched in May 2021 and runs until 2023.

**A focus on pay and benefits:** We took the decision to top up pay to normal rates for staff furloughed during the pandemic. We subsequently completely reviewed our pay and benefits offer, rationalising our pay structure. We also improved our staff benefits and now have a discount package in place for all of our workers.

**A focus on new starters:** At a time when it is difficult to recruit experienced staff we launched our Supported Induction offer. Our Workplace Coaching team have been

supporting individuals and their managers to progress quickly and qualitatively through their induction. Anecdotal reports show that this service has made a real difference to new starter engagement, but we are conducting an evidence-based review and plan to grow the service so that every new starter can access this support.

**A focus on an engaged workforce:** we work hard to ensure that our staff feel a connection to our wider work. We consulted extensively on our refreshed strategy carrying forward Sense's experience of the pandemic. As a result, our leaver data shows us consistently ahead of industry benchmarks. Our staff are engaged in our work - manager turnover is 3% lower than our peers. In fact, turnover is better than the industry benchmark in all categories.

**A focus on listening to staff:** we have significantly increased representation on our Staff Forum which has met twice as often during the pandemic. We've focused on topics which staff think are important, including projects on, for example, domestic abuse and menopause.

### **Senior management pay**

Sense is a complex organisation which works across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our workforce is engaged not only in health and social care, providing specialist personalised support to help people communicate and make the most of their potential, but also education, campaigning and supporter engagement work, while our retail arm runs over 100 shops in England and Wales.

Our sister organisation, Sense International, works with partners in East Africa, parts of Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

Salaries for the Chief Executive and the Executive Team are set and reviewed by the Remuneration Committee, a sub-committee of our Board of Trustees (Council). The benefits available are in line with other employees, and pay is externally benchmarked in a similar way.

## The Governance of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

During 2020/21 and up to the adoption of the annual report and financial statements by Council: there have been 14 Trustees, some of whom were in post for part of the year. Trustees are also (for the purposes of company law) Directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. Their names are set out later in this report.

Currently Trustees can be co-opted to our Council or elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and can serve two terms of four years. Those co-opted can be reappointed annually up to a maximum of eight years.

Council usually meets four times a year and Trustees are expected to attend all Council meetings. In 2020/21, due to the Pandemic, Council met nine times.

### Sub-committees

Four sub-committees support the Council in its work: Finance and Audit, Remuneration, Nominations and the Engagement sub-committees. Each sub-committee has written Terms of Reference, which are reviewed as necessary and included in the Governance Handbook. Council appoints the members of the sub-committees annually and receives either the minutes from their meetings, or reports of their activities, with any recommendations.

#### **Finance and Audit sub-committee**

The Finance and Audit sub-committee's main purposes are to:

- Ensure that financial resources are deployed appropriately in furtherance of the charity's strategic objectives.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of Sense's internal and external auditing procedures and outcomes.
- To report to and advise Sense Council on all matters within the purview of the Committee

Committee membership comprises at least three Trustees, in addition to the Chair (the Honorary Treasurer). Apart from Trustees, the Committee can co-opt new members who they feel will bring relevant financial expertise.

The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources attend the meetings.

### **Nominations sub-committee**

The role of the Nominations sub-committee is to: identify skills gaps in Council membership, oversee the recruitment process of Council members and recommend prospective Trustees to Council for election or co-option, ensuring that, once appointed, they have an appropriate induction. Membership of the sub-committee comprises at least one other Trustee in addition to the Chair. The Head of Governance attends the meetings.

Prospective Trustees are interviewed by the Nominations sub-committee and, if successful, their appointment is recommended to Council. With the agreement of the Chair, nominees are invited to a Council meeting as an observer, following which, with the agreement of Council, they are co-opted, until standing for election at the next AGM.

New Trustees receive a comprehensive induction pack. An appropriate induction plan is also put in place, which involves meetings with senior staff, internal and external training as necessary, and visits to Sense's services as appropriate.

### **Remuneration sub-committee**

The Remuneration sub-committee ensures that Sense's remuneration strategy for members of the Executive Team, and its implementation, is perceived by all stakeholders to be transparent, fair and effective; that total remuneration is commensurate with personal and corporate performance and market expectations; and that overall packages enable Sense to recruit suitably skilled, qualified and experienced people.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee were updated in 2017. The membership comprises the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, with a quorum of two. The Chief Executive is a non-voting ex officio member but is not present for discussions regarding his own remuneration.

## **Engagement sub-committee**

This new sub-committee was approved by Council in March 2020 to help deliver a key component of Sense's current strategy – driving an increase in awareness of the organisation and raising charitable funds.

The Engagement sub-committee is responsible for advising Council about fundraising and marketing matters, monitoring the implementation of the Engagement Strategy, providing oversight of key activity, campaigns and outcomes and making recommendations about plans and activities.

The Committee has at least one member in addition to the Chair and can co-opt external members. The meetings are attended by the Group Director of Engagement.

## **Executive Team**

Sense Council delegates day-to-day operational management of the organisation to the Chief Executive. The broad areas of delegation for which he is accountable have been agreed by Council and are set out in the Governance Handbook.

To ensure these responsibilities are discharged effectively, the Chief Executive is responsible for appointing, managing and developing senior staff to take direct responsibility for these areas, and for putting in place appropriate reporting and assurance mechanisms.

The Executive Team meets regularly and includes the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operational Services, Group Director of Finance & Resources, Group Director of Engagement, five other functional Directors and the Head of Governance.

## The Articles of Association for Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

Council agreed in June 2021 to revised Articles which included updated Objects, set out on page 28, making it clear that while Sense primarily supports and works with people who are deafblind, we also work with people with a range of complex disabilities. The Articles of Sense were last comprehensively reviewed in 2011.

A number of other changes were made, including changing the name 'Council' to the 'Board of Trustees', Chairman to Chair and giving the Board of Trustees the power to appoint Trustees and to report this to the AGM, if one is held.

Trustees can still serve two four-year terms. The Chair can serve two four-year terms which can be extended by the Board for two more years, to a maximum of 10 years.

The new Articles were adopted by an Extraordinary General Meeting (of company members) held on July 27th 2021 on condition that the Charity Commission consented to the amendment of the Objects.

## The Governance Handbook

In addition to the areas covered above (Terms of Reference and delegated matters), the 'Governance Handbook' also includes sections on our values, commitment to diversity, the appointment of Trustees, and role profiles for the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, other Trustees; the Trustee induction process; the Trustee Code of Conduct; the Trustee conflict of interest policy; and Council's agenda cycle. An updated version (the 7th) was last approved by Council in June 2020.

## The Charity Governance Code

The Code, which was updated in December 2020, specifies that the Boards of large charities should publish brief statements in the annual report on three areas:

### **Principle 4: Describing the charity's approach to risk.**

This can be found on page 63

### **Principle 5: Explaining how the board is reviewed.**

In December 2020, Council decided that there would be an internal review, which took place in April 2021, through a comprehensive survey which went to all Trustees and the members of the Executive Team who attend Council. The results were reported to Council in June 2021. These were positive, with an overall conclusion that Council operates well as a team, in a positive and transparent atmosphere and takes decisions well.

An action list was also approved, which included the need for Council to have a deeper understanding of the needs of the people which Sense supports and that future recruitment should take account not only of skills and experience, but also diversity across all of the protected characteristics.

### **Principle 6: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Council had previously agreed a commitment to a diverse board with a reasonable balance across various areas including gender, age, involvement of people with complex disabilities or their family members, and people from various professional backgrounds and to work to achieve greater diversity.

One of the questions asked in the Governance Review was about increasing the diversity of Trustees. There was general agreement about the need to recruit Trustees with a 'lived experience' of disabilities and that there is an under-representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lead has been appointed and gave a presentation to Council on the launch of the new EDI Strategy in June 2021. This will be taken forward over the coming months in relation to Council and to the organisation as a whole.

### **Public benefit**

Trustees have referred to the information contained in the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The information contained in this report about our services and achievements gives clear examples of how our work is beneficial and brings public benefit.

Our objectives for next year show that Sense will continue to provide public benefit in line with our objects.

## Stakeholder Statements

The information about engagement with our employees and other stakeholders is given in the Section 172 Statement on p 54

## The Sense Group

### Working together

#### Our Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

The Sense Group comprises two discrete legal entities: Sense and Sense International, in addition to the subsidiaries as set out below.

Both Sense and Sense International are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee, with their own Boards and Memorandum and Articles. The objects of both charities are similar and refer to supporting people who are deafblind and have sensory impairments.

Our shared vision is a world where no one who is deafblind or has complex disabilities is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Each organisation runs its own activities to work towards this vision.

Information about Sense International is given below, but additional details can be found in their own annual report and financial statements.

**Sense** is the trading name for Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association, which is a registered charity (charity number: 289868) and a company limited by guarantee (company number: 01825301). It is governed by its Articles of Association.

Sense works primarily in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the Corporate Trustee of the Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham). It is the sole member of Sense International and Sense4Enterprise Limited, and also holds 100% of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited.

Its objects throughout 2020/21 have been: 'To support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or who have a hearing or vision impairment, including those with any additional impairments or persons who are suffering from the congenital effects of rubella'. The Objects of Sense International are similar.

The objects approved by members in July 2021 and awaiting formal consent from the Charity Commission are:

### “3 Objects

The objects for which the Charity is established (the "Objects") are to:

3.1 primarily support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or have multi-sensory impairments;

3.2 and to support persons who, by virtue of having a learning disability or one or more mental or physical impairments, or sensory impairment(s), require care and/or communication support

(together, the "beneficiaries").”

**Sense International** is a registered charity (charity number: 1076497), a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986) and is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association. It works on a global basis, raising the needs of people with deafblindness and working with partner organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Sense is the only member of Sense International.

#### **Sense also has a number of subsidiaries:**

**Helping Sense Limited** is Sense’s trading company (company number: 02214430). It is governed by its own Memorandum and Articles of Association, and its main activity is the sale of goods through Sense’s charity shops. All profits from its activities are donated to Sense.

**Sense4Enterprise Limited** (company number: 08112973) is a registered company limited by guarantee, set up to enable Sense to take forward social enterprise activities.

**The Royal School for Deaf Children (Birmingham)** is a registered charity (charity number: 528908). The Charity Commission granted a linking order permitting its activities to be reported within Sense’s report without the need to file its own separate annual report

and financial statements. It is governed by its trust deed but does not operate in its own right.

This is the consolidated annual report and financial statements for all the Sense organisations. Sense International publishes its own annual reports and financial statements that describe its activities and finances in more detail.

## **Sense Group Trustees and senior staff**

### **Sense Council members from 1 April 2020 to the present**

Dr Justin Molloy (Chair) (RC)

Gillian Wood (Vice Chair), (Chair NC, RC)

Andrew Pearson (Chair of F&A) (EC, RC, TB)

Saeed Ahmed (Appointed February 2021)

George Aivazoglou (EC Chair)

Natalie Assad (NC)

Ashling Barvé (re-elected 2020) (QB)

Graham Callister (re-elected 2020)

Mythily Katsaris (re-elected 2020) (F&A)

Mark Cammies (F&A, EC, TB)

Simon Jones (Chair of the College Governing Body) (F&A)

Benedict Leigh (re-elected 2020)

Desmond Lucy (resigned Sept 2020)

Brian Symington

**Key** (to the initials shown above)

#### **Sub-Committees of Council**

EC – Engagement Committee

F&A Finance & Audit Committee

RC Remuneration Committee

#### **Other Internal Boards of which Trustees are members**

QB Quality Board

TB Trading Board

During this year there were four female and ten male Trustees/Directors.

## **Sense International Board from 1 April 2020 to the present**

Sunil Shah (Treasurer)

Sunil Sheth (Chair)

Maria Arce-Moreira

Richard Cooper

Nicholas Corby

Dean Lumer

Lucy Roberts

Raaxeet Shah

Verity Stiff

Susan Turner (stepped down 15 September 2020)

Lauren Watters

Gillian Wood (appointed 15 September 2020)

During the year there were six female and six male Trustees/Directors.

## **Sense Executive Team**

**Richard Kramer** Chief Executive (also Chief Executive of Sense International)

**Kris Murali** Deputy Chief Executive (Resigned May 2020)

**Maria Horton** Group Director of Operations

**Catherine Still** Group Director of Finance and Resources (Appointed May 2020.

Previously Director of Finance)

**Chris Jarrett** Group Director of Engagement (Appointed May 2020. Previously Director of Engagement)

**Alison Marshall** Director of Sense International

**Adrian Darkin** Director of Trading

**Alison Bennett** Director of Human Resources (resigned June 2021)

**Emma Evans** People Director (appointed August 2021)

**Jonathan Monk** Director of Operational Programmes

**Tony Colson** Director of ICT

In the year there were five female Directors and six male Directors.

The Trustees' Report, was approved by order of the Council and signed on its behalf by;

**Dr Justin Molloy, Chair**  
22 September 2021



## **The Strategic Report of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association Group**

### **Sense performance against Objectives 2020/21**

**In last year's annual report, we said that we would continue to pursue the four Strategic Outcomes of our Strategy for 2019-22.**

**We set out below the major activity for each one in 2020-21.**

#### **Refreshing our Strategy**

We made the decision to revise our existing strategy in light of what we have learned over the past 12 months. We have developed our priorities for the future, building on the important lessons and ways of working from the last period.

The focus of the revised strategy is not only on 'what' we do but 'how' we deliver our aspirations. We will collectively agree how we can increase our reach, impact and income over the period 2021-2025.

We will report on progress with these through some key performance indicators for the next year which are set out at the end of this section.

**Below we report on some of the things we have achieved under each of the strategic outcomes during this past year.**

#### **Strategic outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start**

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately, adversely affected the families of children and young people who are deafblind or have complex disabilities. Families lost much of the support they rely on and felt isolated and abandoned. Parents and carers reported a significant increase in pressure and concern about the physical safety and emotional health of their whole family.

Sense adapted our work so that we could meet their needs. We found new ways to run accessible activities, to increase families' confidence using new technology and enabled people to connect with each other online. We were successful in securing grants from the

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the National Lottery Community Fund, and also grants from other charitable trusts to expand our online support for children and families, to provide essential guidance, activities and virtual events for the whole family. These services have been described as a 'lifeline' by many families and have provided consistent and meaningful support throughout the pandemic.

**Key Achievements:**

- We supported 2,456 children, young people and families
- We organised 52 online family events, which brought 510 families together for information, support and activities
- 266 families received specialist technology and equipment to enable them to access online support
- We supported 220 children and young people at 10 specialist health clinics working in partnership with multi-disciplinary health teams
- 15 awareness raising sessions were delivered to 396 people, including professionals and families
- 104 siblings and young carers accessed dedicated support to take part in activities to make friends, share experiences and have a break for themselves through our online activities

**Strategic outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

In 2020/1 and since, our dedicated staff have worked hard through the pandemic to ensure that everyone in our services was safe and supported.

Sense believes passionately that each person with a complex disability should be able – as far as possible – to choose the support and lifestyle that is right for them. All Sense specialist services are built around each individual's needs and preferences so that they are supported to live the life they choose.

Our Sense Users Reference Group (SURG) gives the adults we support the opportunity to share their views, ideas and experiences of Sense and our services. It has played a vital

role throughout the pandemic ensuring that the voice of people who use services is heard through regular virtual meetings.

In addition to SURG, Sense now has its first Experts by Experience group who will be undertaking audits and influencing the quality of services.

We are now in phase three of Working Together for Change, an important programme that ensures we take into account the needs, wishes and aspirations of the people we support.

### **Key achievements**

- We supported 335 adults in our **Sense residential and supported living services** through which individuals with complex disabilities are supported to run their day-to-day lives as they wish and to be as independent as possible.
- Sense has opened a new supported living service in Dover. The scheme for nine individuals is ready for occupation and Sense is working with commissioners to identify suitable tenants.
- Sense was selected as the preferred provider for an acquisition in Devon. Twenty individuals live in the scheme and we have been delighted to welcome them into the Sense family.
- 94% of Sense services were rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commissions, with two services rated as Outstanding. Five services rated as 'Good' had 'Outstanding' features. During 2020/21, due to COVID-19, only non-graded infection control inspections have been undertaken which did not identify any actions.
- We work with 193 commissioners and in 2020/21 we started 28 new contracts with Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities; 11 for providing residential or supported living services, 9 for community services and 8 for our colleges.
- Almost 600 adults benefitted from our **Sense Day Opportunities** supporting adults to build connections, develop their communication skills, life skills and independence; connect with other people; express themselves through arts and crafts; and take part in sport and exercise – all supported by our skilled and specialist staff.
- **Sense College** continues to grow providing 16 to 25-year olds with specialist education programmes at eight of our Sense Centres.

- In September 2020, Sense acquired a college in the East Midlands, Sense College Loughborough. The college is a wonderful opportunity for Sense to grow our programmes and work has begun to integrate it into the existing Sense provision.

### **Strategic outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected with their communities**

Before the pandemic, half of all disabled people felt lonely every day, rising to 75% of disabled young people. National lockdowns, shielding and social distancing have made this sense of isolation and loneliness even worse.

Sense has responded to this challenge by moving our services online to provide much needed support to tackle the loneliness and isolation people were experiencing as a result of the restrictions and the closure of services. The national programme is called **Sense Connect** and offers online and face to face opportunities for people to connect with others, make friends and take part in activities.

Initially funded for six months from the Government Tackling Loneliness Grant and now continued through other grants, Sense Connect has meant that we have been able to reach even more people living with complex disabilities and their families

#### **Key achievements:**

- Nearly 6,000 people have benefitted from our support through Sense Connect.
- We received unprecedented interest from volunteers wanting to be involved in our virtual buddies project during the pandemic
- Over 100 children and young people, up to the age of 25, have accessed our 'Get Out There' short breaks and social groups across the country
- Our highly valued holidays programme was cancelled during 2020 as a result of the pandemic – plans are underway for the return of holidays during summer 2021.

#### **Arts, Well-being & Sport Programme**

In addition to this, our well-established Sports, Arts and Wellbeing Programme has also managed to switch their many activities from face to face to digital.

## **Arts and Wellbeing**

- 1,352 Arts and Wellbeing boxes were sent to people homes.
- We reach over 1,500 virtually, with 172 live sessions via Zoom.
- These sessions have included puppetry and theatre, dance, sound bathing, music, pottery, visual arts, textiles, sculpture, mosaic, and performance.
- We also launched the Sense Arts Connect manifesto and The Zara Show Podcast. We collaborated with several deaf/disabled & neurodivergent artists to create a robust model of accessible digital delivery and are one of the only arts/care organisations creating work for hearing and vision impaired online audiences. We delivered this as training to a number of arts organisations and continue to build our profile.
- As part of the Sense Connect funding, we were able to recruit an additional arts and wellbeing coordinator and work more closely with Sense's buddying, children's services, and the sibling programme.

## **Sports Programme** (which is funded by Sport England)

We reached 3,326 people with 349 live sessions via zoom for activities like Tai Chi, Yoga, Boxing, Drumming to Music & Dance were run.

29 'on demand' YouTube videos were created so that people could take part in activities at a time to suit them. They included seated Yoga, table tennis, multi-sports skills, and dance.

120 sports activity kits were sent out to people's homes. These are designed to support people to be active at home during lockdown, and in their local parks and open spaces. Our 'mini games' toolkit has provided people with ideas of how to be active with limited equipment, or by using every-day household objects. Our 'sensory walks' toolkit includes advice on planning walks, tips on encouraging mindfulness and suggested sensory activities.

In March 2021 we expanded our sports provision to the South West Region, appointing a Sport & Physical Activity Co-ordinator who is connecting Sense services, and individuals in the community who can benefit from our programme with opportunities to be active.

We have also launched a research report looking at the role of support workers in supporting people to be active and have an action plan to upskill and build confidence in the support staff network at Sense.

### **The Arts, Sport and Well-being Activity finder**

Having moved all activity online, throughout 2021, we sent fortnightly mail outs telling people what was available. These were downloaded 4,875 times. However, as it had limitations, we decided to create a permanent online 'home' for all activities, so the people we support could dip in and out at a time/date/location that suited them. We developed this with partners, practitioners and coaches across the disability, sports and arts sectors, and launched it on our website in April 2021.

The Activity Finder currently lists over one hundred activities tailored to the different needs of people with complex disabilities, and can be used by families, carers or support staff. Content ranges from inclusive yoga to sound baths. The Finder includes written activity sheets, pre-recorded videos and booking for live sessions for a huge variety of ASW opportunities.

### **Strategic outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action**

#### **Key Achievements:**

#### **Our Campaigns**

We launched a digital engagement campaign, '**Sense Sign School**' at the start of the first lockdown, and over eighty thousand people took part in free British Sign Language lessons from teacher 'Mr Tyrese' -15-year old Tyrese Dibba, from Birmingham, who is deaf, has been supported by Sense since he was a child, and played a major part in the campaign, teaching the classes. In recognition of his role, Tyrese has been given the Pride of Birmingham award.

We kept the experiences of families and disabled people in the media, from features on testing in care homes for Channel 4 News, to face coverings and why not everyone can wear one, for BBC Breakfast.

Our '**Forgotten Families**' campaign highlighted the experience of families caring for adults, and the impact of cuts to services. It was picked up by national news and this prompted over a thousand people to sign our letter calling on government to reintroduce support for disabled adults and their families.

The '**Left Out of Life**' campaign aimed to tackle isolation and loneliness amongst disabled people. Sixty thousand people saw our campaign film, featuring a voiceover by disabled actress Cherylee Houston, highlighting the barriers preventing disabled people from fully participating in society. Following national press coverage of the campaign, over eight thousand people signed up to our pledge promising to do their part to tackle the issue, learning everyday actions which will help. The campaign is now currently focused on local communities, encouraging venues and social activities to become more accessible.

'**Sense Awards**' recognises the achievements of people with complex disabilities and the staff, carers, family members, volunteers and fundraisers that support them. Because of COVID-19 we had to cancel the physical ceremony, but we still celebrated our outstanding winners online and it proved to be one of our most popular and engaging activities of the year on social media.

## **Policy Achievements**

Throughout the year, coronavirus has dominated much of the policy and public affairs agenda. Sense championed the needs of people with complex disabilities from a position of being both a provider of social care services and an organisation representing those with complex disabilities and their families. Our engagement with civil servants, ministers and decision makers has resulted in the outcomes below:

- **Services have been delivered safely and provided vital support for people with complex disabilities and their families** after we made the case for focussing on the breadth of services that support people with complex disabilities, rather than just elderly people. As a result, Sense services (staff and residents) are able to access testing, vaccinations and funding to enable them to continue to deliver vital support safely and in new ways.

- **Parents of disabled children/family carers received recognition for the valuable role that they play:** they are now able to access the COVID-19 vaccination as a priority group.
- **Disabled children and adults have legal rights to care and support:** their legal rights have been reinstated and it is no longer permissible for local authorities to delay assessing or meeting needs.

Our profile with parliamentarians has also increased and we had many more meetings with MPs and ministers, mentions in parliament and questions tabled on our behalf, than ever before.

### **Progress with Our Digital Strategy**

We quickly developed a new digital strategy which enables us to increase engagement with our work externally, while also helping us to collaborate across internal business functions. Some highlights of this are:

- The Sense website traffic rose 60% in 2020-21, powered by the Sense Sign School campaign and the transfer of many of our services to a virtual model.
- Interest in our online resources to make activities more inclusive, such as sensory walks, trebled.
- Our activity picker, allowing people to choose online arts, sports and wellbeing activities, proved an instant success.
- Income through the website doubled as our supporters turned to online channels to help keep our services running.
- We also saw real growth in Sense's social media community, up 145%. A significant proportion of this came from our Instagram profile growing to over 5,000 followers.

### **Sense Objectives for 2021-22**

Next year we will continue to work to achieve the 4 Strategic Outcomes from our refreshed Strategy for 2021-26 – No one Left out of Life.

In particular, we will work to achieve the following:

### **Strategic outcome 1: Children and families get the best possible start**

- Increase the number of children and families we support by 50%
- Launch a new national programme to support children and families to get the best possible start
- Double the number of siblings and young carers that benefit from regular and dedicated activities for themselves.

### **Strategic outcome 2: Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives**

- Increase income for our commissioned services by £750k.
- Partner with 10 organisations to ensure that more adults with complex disabilities receive support.

### **Strategic outcome 3: Individuals are less lonely and more connected with their communities**

- 3 x increase in the number of children, young people and adults supported by a volunteer buddy
- Launch a national programme of inclusive dance
- Identify and start development on the first of our new hubs and identify the second one.

### **Strategic outcome 4: Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action**

- 10% increase in the number of supporters
- 40% increase in digital engagement across the website and social engagement
- Increase the number of volunteers across our activities by 30%

## **Sense International performance against objectives for 2020-21**

### **Strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2021**

Sense International is a global charity supporting people with deafblindness in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. Children and adults with deafblindness in these countries struggle to access the healthcare, education,

vocational training and opportunities to participate in their community which they have a right to.

We provide expertise, training and support to local organisations, to enable children and adults with deafblindness to communicate, develop self-care, study at home or at school and learn skills to generate an income. We also advocate to governments to make changes to laws, policies and practices so people with deafblindness can thrive.

## **COVID-19**

The COVID pandemic affected all our teams during this year. Our activities have been constantly adapted to the changing needs of the people with deafblindness we support, the changing public health situation in the countries we operate in, and the changing priorities of donors.

Despite some of our activities being severely curtailed, particularly home-visits to children with deafblindness, we have mobilised staff and partners to contact the people with deafblindness we support, and their families, with information on how to stay safe, worked to get food parcels and hygiene equipment to families, worked to connect families to local support schemes where these exist and have been advocating to governments for people with deafblindness to be included in national response plans. We have also fed into government guidance to make it more disability inclusive, for example, plans to re-open schools.

## **Four strategic objectives**

Sense International has four strategic objectives:

- Ensure quality services.
- Improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness.
- The voice of people with deafblindness is heard.
- Rights are recognised and realised.

### **Strategic objective 1 - Ensure quality services**

Across Sense International we strive to demonstrate the benefits of increasing access to high quality services for people with deafblindness, including working with government

ministries to encourage learning and sustainability. We work across three themes:  
screening and early intervention, inclusive education and vocational skills and livelihoods.

### **Screening and Early Intervention**

The sooner any baby with visual and/or hearing impairment is identified, and given the support they need, the more likely they are to develop to their full potential.

We demonstrate to Ministries of Health how screening can identify impairment at an early stage, and the huge difference that professional early years support and therapy can make. We train health workers and enable parents to understand and communicate with their child, as well as working with them at home to boost their child's progress towards achieving their developmental milestones.

### **Key achievements**

**India:** Early intervention screening and services were disrupted in the year due to the pandemic. However over 2000 children were screened for sensory impairments with more than 600 children receiving early intervention services, including 5 with deafblindness and multi-sensory impairments.

**Kenya:** A new sensory screening and early intervention project started in Garissa and Kwale Counties in October 2020, targeting 55,000 children to be screened for sensory impairments and 124 children and their families supported through early intervention therapy. In 2020-21 the construction of four early intervention units started, sensory screening and therapy equipment was sourced and 169 health workers were trained on disability and sensory screening.

**Tanzania:** More than 10,000 children were screened for sensory impairments with 85 being identified with deafblindness and other complex disabilities being supported with early intervention therapy services and assistive devices.

	<p><b>Uganda:</b> Between April and September almost 7000 children were screened for sensory impairments with 50 children being identified with deafblindness and other complex disabilities and supported with early intervention therapy and assistive devices.</p>
<p><b>Inclusive Education</b></p> <p>Every child has the right to an education. We work with families, schools, colleges, partner organisations, government institutions and Ministries of Education, to enable learners with deafblindness to fulfil their potential, by getting the educational support that they need.</p> <p>This may be home-based, centre-based or in a mainstream school where the child receives support from a learning support assistant. We do what is needed to enable children with deafblindness to learn – from training parents and teachers, to providing specialist technology and adapting school facilities, curricula and learning materials.</p>	<p><b>Key achievements</b></p> <p><b>Bangladesh:</b> We worked with 10 partner organisations across the country to provide education and livelihood support to 695 children and young adults. Much activity was through mobile phone rather than face-to-face due to pandemic. In addition, we provided cash support to the families which allowed them to survive the pandemic.</p> <p><b>India:</b> More than 1700 children received centre based, home based and online services during the year and almost 1000 teachers were trained on appropriate teaching techniques for children with deafblindness studying in mainstream schools. A further 4200 educators, parents and other professionals were trained on deafblindness through 17 national webinars. Parents and caregivers were trained through a three-month online course and 115 paramedical and medical professionals were also trained helping to address some of the barriers to education for children with deafblindness.</p> <p><b>Kenya:</b> We developed the Learning Support</p>

	<p>Assistants (LSAs) curriculum, guidelines and training manual and trained 99 LSAs through the Kenya Institute of Special Education enabling 99 children with deafblindness and other complex disabilities to be identified and enrolled in mainstream education. A further 163 children with deafblindness and other complex disabilities received home-based education. We trained 254 education professionals on disability and inclusive education for children with deafblindness and other complex disabilities. Handwashing stations distributed to 75 schools, food and medicine distributed to over 300 families, training on soap making delivered in nine schools. Accessible COVID 19 information was produced and distributed.</p> <p><b>Nepal:</b> We set up a resource class in a community school in Rupandehi enrolling 6 children with deafblindness. Work has also been done on selecting another community school for an additional resource class. Once operational, school enrolment campaigns will be conducted in both districts. Currently, we are supporting 66 children and young adults with deafblindness to attend school.</p> <p><b>Peru:</b> 235 educational professionals were trained in specialised teaching methods for learners with deafblindness (including 81 teachers in Bolivia). Three new sensory rooms established in special education schools with staff trained in sensory</p>
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	<p>stimulation approach. New referral system was developed and launched to ensure improved access to inclusive education for students with deafblindness.</p> <p><b>Romania:</b> E-Sense educational software platform launched to support teachers and parents of learners with sensory impairments and testing began with partner schools.</p> <p><b>Tanzania:</b> We conducted a capacity assessment of special primary schools to support learners with deafblindness/multi-sensory impairments. We also started the process of rolling out the Orbit Reader 20 for learners with vision impairments in partnership with the Tanzania Institute of Education, the Ministry of Education and Kilimanjaro Blind Trust.</p> <p><b>Uganda:</b> The new Holistic Early Childhood Development (ECD) for children with complex disabilities project was launched enabling access to holistic ECD services that address health, nutrition, safety, protection, stimulation and care needs of 300 children with deafblindness.</p>
<p><b>Vocational training and livelihoods</b></p> <p>Young people with deafblindness want to be as independent as possible. They want to learn vocational skills and earn a living or contribute to the household income. We support them through the different stages of this process, enabling them to join a</p>	<p><b>Key achievements</b></p> <p><b>Bangladesh:</b> Working in partnership with Jhikargacha Development Organization (JDO), we provided training to caregivers and persons with deafblindness on Poultry and Cattle rearing for income generation.</p>

vocational training centre, become an apprentice, or make a plan and start up their own business. We provide links to advisers and local business support schemes.

**India:** About 750 adults with deafblindness and multiple disabilities received centre based, home based and online support in vocational skills, including financial support to start income generating activities or to rebuild their businesses during the pandemic.

**Tanzania:** We trained 36 youths with deafblindness and other complex disabilities on business development, bookkeeping and safeguarding. They were also supported with small grants to set up their own businesses.

**Peru:** We supported 45 young people with deafblindness and their families in Arequipa, Cusco and Lima to develop business plans and launch their enterprises with some seed funding provided, alongside advocacy to the Ministry of Labour to support development of a vocational training model.

**Kenya:** We supported 12 young people with deafblindness, micro-entrepreneurs, with training, guidance and grants for to develop small scale businesses. During the COVID-19 lockdown in Kenya we also provided them with accessible information, personal protective equipment and additional grants to diversify and further develop their businesses.

**Uganda:** We developed and printed vocational skills resource books to support the vocational curriculum for learners with deafblindness and

	<p>other complex disabilities. We also trained 12 Instructors from 6 vocational training centres and established 4 community based vocational institutions. 20 communicator guides were also trained on use of tactile and basic communication skills.</p>
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**Strategic Objective 2: Improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness**

<p><b>Improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness</b></p> <p>We are always seeking to understand more about the challenges facing people with deafblindness and the effectiveness of our interventions. Research provides us with valuable evidence which we use to advocate to governments for improvements in their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p>	<p><b>Key achievements</b></p> <p><b>Bangladesh:</b> We have raised awareness of the rights of people with deafblindness, in the community and schools and developed a video on hygiene practice and health, circulated through local cable channels.</p> <p><b>India:</b> Contributed to the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA) study on the impact of COVID-19 on persons with deafblindness.</p> <p><b>Nepal:</b> We contributed to research on experiences of persons with disabilities by the Institute of Development Studies during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Peru:</b> Learning from the Latin America Children’s Trust (LACT) Education programme documented and shared with Ministry of Education and regional education officials.</p>
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	<p><b>Romania:</b> We held the International conference “Deafblindness during the pandemic” online with over 200 participants sharing learning and experiences from life during the pandemic for people with deafblindness, their families, teachers and support workers. We conducted an online survey of 18 special schools on children and young people with sensory impairments and their internet usage to feed into design of materials for the Sensi-Online Safety for Children with Sensory Impairments project and for wider use.</p> <p><b>Tanzania:</b> We conducted an assessment of 10 resource hubs to support learners with deafblindness and complex disabilities resulting in Sense International Tanzania being requested by the Ministry of Education to support the harmonisation of the draft syllabus in line with competence-based standards.</p> <p><b>Kenya:</b> In partnership with the Action Network for Children with Disabilities we launched the monitoring report on implementation of the early years competence-based curriculum for learners with diverse disabilities. The launch meeting was attended by 50 Government, Non-Government and civil society institutions. Our report of the Rapid Response Fund project in Kenya that was implemented in a response to COVID-19 includes recommendations for disability inclusion in emergency response work, particularly deafblindness and other complex disabilities.</p>
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	<p><b>Uganda:</b> We showcased the Orbit Reader 20 technology at the Teacher Instructor Education and Training department (TIET) third teacher education symposium that was organised by the Ministry of Education.</p>
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**Strategic Objective 3: Voice of people with deafblindness is heard**

<p><b>Voice of people with deafblindness is heard</b></p> <p>Disability activists say “nothing about us without us” and it is right that people living with deafblindness should be the ones speaking out about the challenges they face and the changes they want to see.</p> <p>We support people with deafblindness to speak out through training, networking and providing opportunities to meet with decision-makers. We also support groups of parents of children with deafblindness. While caregivers cannot speak on behalf of their children, they appreciate support to advocate to the government for social protection, access to services and educational opportunities for their children.</p>	<p><b>Key achievements</b></p> <p><b>Bangladesh:</b> Two regional network meetings were attended by 30 young adults with deafblindness.</p> <p><b>India:</b> We encouraged adult deafblind network members to participate in discussions, surveys and consultations. Many of them are engaged with Deafblind International Youth Network and their efforts ensured deafblind inclusion in the Commonwealth Network of Children and Youth with Disabilities (CCYDN). In addition, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued advice using inputs from these recommendations. Our young achiever in sports, Pushpa has been chosen by CNN, the international news agency, to showcase her achievements and challenges as a young adult with deafblindness through a short movie.</p> <p>We have enhanced online engagement of people with Deafblindness and their families and they</p>
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have started interacting with officials to resolve issues related to disability pension, ration and medicine support during lockdown. They are actively participating in webinars, roundtable discussions, Right to Information (RTI) workshops and policy consultations and participated in state advocacy meetings attended by disability commissioners and directors from state departments of education, health and social welfare.

**Nepal:** We organised a national workshop for 44 adults with deafblindness and 19 parents. We also continue to work with Society of Deafblind Parents (SDBP) and Deafblind Association Nepal to ensure the voices of the persons with deafblindness and their parents are heard.

**Romania:** 22 children and young people took part in national campaign on right of people with disabilities and an online advocacy groups of young people with deafblindness was established.

**Tanzania:** We supported the Tanzanian Association of the Deafblind (TASODEB) with an organisational capacity assessment and the development of a capacity strengthening plan.

**Uganda:** We continued to support the National Association of the Deafblind Uganda (NADBU) and the Ugandan Parents of Deafblind Children Association in particular with management and

	<p>communication skills training.</p> <p><b>Peru:</b> we supported the establishment of a new association called the Asociación De Sordociegos Unidos Del Peru (ASCUP), formed by people with deafblindness and family members.</p> <p><b>UK:</b> we continue to work with the World Federation of the Deafblind.</p> <p><b>Looking ahead:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We want more people with deafblindness speaking out, so we will continue to strength the groups and networks which support this.</li> </ul>
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**Strategic objective 4: Rights are recognised and realised**

<p>We advocate for change based on the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other UN Conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We raise awareness among people with deafblindness, their families and communities to increase understanding that everyone has rights to health care, education, decent work, social protection, inclusion and participation. We advocate with governments for progressive realisation of these rights, pushing for better implementation of the UNCRPD at all levels, so that people with</p>	<p><b>Key achievements</b></p> <p><b>Bangladesh:</b> Sense International India organized participation of panel of adults with deafblindness in side events of 59th session of the UN Commission for Social Development.</p> <p><b>India:</b> We advocated for change and progressive realisation of rights of people with deafblindness at state, national and international levels through representation and participation of persons with deafblindness and their families. We've successfully leveraged our special consultative status at United Nations to get visibility at UN High Level Political Forum. Our written and oral statements were published and</p>
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<p>deafblindness can live, learn and thrive.</p>	<p>presented during this and other UN events.</p> <p>We held national webinars around Helen Keller Day and World Disability Day with representation from National institutes. We participate in the State Planning Commission task force of Chattisgarh state and in Delhi state advisory committee to state disability commissioner.</p> <p><b>Romania:</b> We responded to the call for consultations on the new national Strategy for People with Disabilities 2021-27 led by the National Authority for People with Disabilities, highlighting the importance of specifically mentioning deafblindness as a distinct disability and met with Ministry of Labour officials and the President of the National Authority of People with Disabilities to discuss criteria for recognition of deafblindness in legislation.</p> <p><b>Uganda:</b> We organised stakeholder engagement which successfully ensured that specific provisions on deafblindness were included in the draft National Disability Policy.</p>
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## Sense International - Objectives for 2021/22

In 2021/22 we will continue to further the objectives set out in our strategy - 'Realising Rights: From Isolation to Inclusion':

- Strategic objective 1 - Ensure quality services with a focus on early years (screening and early intervention), inclusive education for school-age learners and vocational training and livelihoods for young people.

- Strategic Objective 2 - Improved knowledge and understanding of deafblindness.
- Strategic Objective 3 - Voice of people with deafblindness is heard, including work to support national associations of people with deafblindness.
- Strategic Objective 4 - Rights are recognised and realised, including advocacy at all levels.

## Section 172 Statement

Sense is required by the Companies Act 2006 to make an annual statement about how Directors have 'promoted the success of the company' having regard to the following matters set out in Section 172 of that Act:

### **a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term.**

This particularly informed our decision-making when the Board reviewed the acquisition in the year of a College in the East Midlands, previously owned by the RNIB, and the acquisition after the year end of a residential service operated by another charity in Devon.

### **b) The interests of the company's employees,**

Our Trustees receive an update report on HR related matters at all scheduled meetings. This includes reports of Staff Forum meetings (consultation with employee representatives).

The decision to furlough a large number of employees in April 2020 and to top-up their pay to 100% for a defined period, exemplifies the approach Council takes to valuing Sense staff.

### **c) The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**

Our key stakeholders are the children and families we support. Council receives reports about Sense's services at every meeting. This has been of particular importance in the last 18 months, in terms of the action being taken to make sure that the people we care for are kept safe.

Other important stakeholders are our supporters and volunteers. Council receives regular updates about progress with our Supporter Engagement strategy.

In terms of business relationships, there have been reports on discussions with Banks and with the LPP Pensions scheme, both to Finance & Audit Committee and to Council.

**d) The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**

Sense fosters good community relationships wherever we have services and shops. One of the key ways of doing this is through our shops in England and Wales which have Facebook pages linked to local community groups to share Sense`s activities, campaigns and news. The shops run fun weeks throughout the year with in-store activities for customers and the general public. This enables them to engage with and experience Sense, through learning about the people we support, sensory activities and ways to support the charity. Shops also actively promote the benefits to their communities of the environmental impact of recycling their items, that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

These activities are reported to the 'Trading Board', which is attended by the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee and another Trustee.

Unfortunately, our shops were closed for five months in 2020/21 because of lockdowns.

**e) The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**

The reputation of Sense is critical to our long-term future.

Trustees discuss our safeguarding policies and the Quality and Safeguarding Boards, which have an external chair and members, make annual reports to Council.

Sense has a Whistleblowing Policy which allows access to an independent external organisation. Were it to be invoked, the Finance & Audit Committee has the responsibility for monitoring the impact of the Policy throughout the organisation and to ensure that any issues raised are dealt with effectively.

**f) The need to act fairly as between members of the company**

There are almost 1,000 company members. They were all informed of the AGM, which was held in December 2020, and the Extraordinary General Meeting held in July 2021 to approve the proposed Articles of Association. Members were able to appoint proxies if they were unable to attend in person. Both meetings were called by Council and attended by Trustees.

## **Statement of the responsibilities of the Council of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

The Trustees (who are also directors of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have prepared the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company/group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2019);
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the

group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In accordance with Section 418, directors' reports shall include a statement, in the case of each director in office at the date the directors' report is approved, that:

- so far as the Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company and the group's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

## Internal financial controls

The Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of control, both financial and otherwise, in place. The systems of internal control are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. They include:

- A five-year strategic plan and an annual budget approved by Council. A number of matters are specifically reserved for the Council's approval.
- Regular consideration of financial results, variance from budgets, non-financial performance indicators and benchmarking reviews by the Finance and Audit sub-committee and Council.
- The annual internal audit programme was suspended in 2020/21 due to the pandemic. It is currently being reviewed and will be agreed by the Finance and Audit sub-committee. Outcomes of the audits are reported to the subcommittee with action plans.
- The development of policy documents covering all major strategic and operational activities. The Executive Team reviews these with appropriate regularity and consultation.

## **Anti-bribery Policy**

Sense has an anti-bribery policy which sets out the definition of bribery and makes it the responsibility of all employees and Trustees to prevent and report any bribery issues. If necessary, this can be through using Sense's whistleblowing procedure which provides a number of possible contacts, including an external organisation.

## Financial Review of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association 2020-21

### Overview

This review focuses on the year ended 31 March 2021 and reflects the effect of the coronavirus virus pandemic on Sense's finances. The year saw two national and prolonged closures of our charity shops, as well as partial closures before Christmas, and activity in our accommodation, day, education and community services was severely curtailed for the whole year. In fundraising, we were forced to cancel many of our high-income generating events, providing a challenge to replace lost income.

However, Sense responded strongly to the challenge, and despite losing ground on trading activity in the year, we were able to secure alternative much needed funds, which enabled us to continue providing services as far as was possible given the restrictions.

Reflecting the outstanding response to our emergency fundraising appeal, the Group reported a healthy surplus. Although opportunities to invest that surplus in services during the year were limited because of national restrictions, the Group has developed a three-year plan to invest in innovation and growth of service delivery in future years. We aim to increase the number of individuals whose lives we touch tenfold in the next three years, by driving innovation and testing new solutions and we will need to maintain our focus on fundraising in order to sustain this ambitious direction of travel.

In September 2020 Sense acquired the operating assets of Loughborough College from RNIB, outsourcing delivery of our Information and Advice service at the same time, for an aggregate consideration of £1.525m.

Group net income before an actuarial loss on the defined benefit pension scheme was £5.1m (2020: £0.5m): after the pension scheme loss of £4.2m (2020: £3.8m) the movement in funds was £0.9m (2020: loss of £3.3m).

Cash and cash equivalents increased by £7.4m (2020: decrease of £3.8m) leaving a cash and equivalents balance of £19.6m (2020: £12.2m). The liability on the defined benefit pension scheme was £10.0m (2020: £6.6m).

Reserves increased to £32.6m (2020: £31.7m) of which £3.4m (2020: £3.3m) are restricted.

We remain in a strong position to deliver our current strategy and to invest in our long-term sustainability.

### **Financial Highlights**

The main effect of the national COVID-19 lockdowns during the year was on our charity shops were able to open for only 40% of normal trading days in the year. As a result, income from trading reduced to £4.5m (2020: £10.6m). In response, retail staff were furloughed on a number of occasions during the year and Sense took advantage of the national grants available for retail businesses.

Our shops reopened fully on 12th April 2021 and trading levels since then have been very encouraging and consistently better than we had expected. We are continuing our programme of opening new shops throughout the current year.

Success in fundraising efforts meant that income from donations and legacies increased sharply to £13.7m (2020: £10.2m) partly driven by legacy income of £4.1m (2020: £2.7m).

Income from service delivery remained stable in the year despite the temporary closure of some services because of the pandemic and was boosted by income of £1.5m from Loughborough College following its acquisition in the year.

Other income comprises furlough grants claimed in the year of £2.6m (2020: nil) and retail grants of £1.9m (2020: nil) and infection control grants of £0.9m (2020: nil).

Operational services were able to access additional government funds to offset the additional cost of infection control measures and the purchase of PPE.

Expenditure remained stable or decreased as lockdowns restricted work to maintain and invest in our estate and travelling and office costs fell. Charitable expenditure rose by £1.3m (2020: nil) following the acquisition of Loughborough College in September 2020.

Support costs increased in the year reflecting investment in IT equipment and support so that all office-based staff could work from home safely, comfortably and effectively.

## **Sense International**

Income fell slightly to £2.32m (2020: £2.48m) as a result of lower income from fundraising events and from the charity shops which Sense operates for Sense International's benefit. Total expenditure was £2.46m (2020: £2.29m). The proportion of expenditure spent on charitable activities was unaltered at 89% (2020: 89%).

## **Acquisition of operations of The Otterhayes Trust**

In January 2021 Sense agreed to the transfer of the operating and property assets of The Otterhayes Trust, an independent charity running a supported living and residential site located in Devon, for consideration of £0.5m. The transfer was completed on 14th April 2021 and will strengthen our net income and asset base and provide resources and expertise to the site for the positive development of the service for the individuals it supports.

## **Reserves**

The Trustees regularly review free reserves to ensure that there are adequate funds to support all the activity that Sense Group undertakes. This review takes into consideration maintenance of the property assets required to provide a service to the people we support, planned development projects and a contingency for unforeseen events.

Maintenance of the fixed assets we utilise to provide accommodation and other building-based services to our beneficiaries, along with planned development projects, are allowed for within designated reserves to earmark adequate funding. This year designated reserves are £10.5m (2020: £9.7m) reflecting planned investments in service delivery and achieving the strategic plan.

We consider unforeseen risks when setting a minimum level of free reserves. We define free reserves as unrestricted reserves minus fixed assets (offset by any long-term borrowings taken out to support the purchase of those assets) minus any designated reserves. The pension deficit is excluded from this calculation as the liability, which is

reassessed annually, is a long term one and a long term deficit reduction plan has been agreed with the funds administrators.

Free reserves at March 2021 were £6.3m (2020: £2.9m).

After considering various scenarios and the risks to our income streams, the Trustees consider that minimum free reserves are £3.6m: we are therefore well above that target.

### **Going Concern**

The financial statements show that our cash and reserves position means that we are able to fund our revenue expenditure together with pension fund deficit reduction payments and bank loan repayments. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and the risks that might threaten those forecasts. Together with our risk management policies, the strong reserves position allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and that therefore it is appropriate to continue to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

### **Pensions**

In addition to ongoing defined contribution pension schemes, Sense is a legacy member of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), formerly the London Pension Fund Authority, a public sector provider of defined benefit pensions and a traditional pension body for local authorities. Sense closed membership of the LPP scheme to new entrants in 2003 and has since been working to manage the actuarial risk that all defined benefit schemes bring.

In 2014 remaining active members were asked to voluntarily leave the scheme and join the defined contribution scheme offered for all other employees. This transfer took effect in October 2014 and Sense has no remaining active members in the LPP scheme and no further service liabilities are being incurred for active members.

We continue to review options with LPP on when to request a cessation value and leave the scheme completely and in the meantime will continue with a long-term repayment plan which is reviewed every three years. Nevertheless, the considerable number of past and present employees who are pensioners or 'deferred' members (i.e. no longer active

members but not yet drawing their pension) means that Sense must account for its share of the deficit of the LPP scheme as explained in detail in note 11.

The deficit, calculated under FRS 102 accounting rules, increased in the year from £6.6m to £10.0m, despite a deficit reduction payment of £0.9m. The deficit increase of £3.4m was made up of two components:

- The value of assets increased by £5.6m because of a strong recovery in the market value of investments from values at March 2020
- Liabilities increased by £9.0m driven by a reduction in the discount rate assumption and higher assumed future pension increases, offset by more favourable demographic and experience assumptions

## **Investment Strategy**

Funds are invested to minimise the risk of loss while ensuring liquid resources are available to meet future cash needs. As at March 2021, surplus funds were held in the form of short-term fixed interest deposits with major UK banks.

## **Risk appetite**

We recognise that no investments can be entirely risk free if we are to achieve our stated investment aims but we have an appetite only for very low risk investments.

## **Ethical investments**

Where relevant, Sense aims to hold ethical investments that are consistent with its charitable objectives.

## **Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The Council has delegated day-to-day responsibility for the management of risks to the Chief Executive and the Executive Team.

The Executive Team is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk, including those monitored on departmental risk registers, and for reporting on this to the Finance

and Audit committee. The Executive Team is also responsible for developing risk mitigation strategies and controls and for implementing actions to minimise or reduce risk to acceptable levels. The risk register is regularly considered at Executive Team meetings.

The Finance and Audit sub-committee is responsible for overseeing the establishment and maintenance of good practice in this area and for reporting to the Council at each of its meetings. In addition, the Council reviews the overall risk register at each of its quarterly meetings.

At the end of last year Council and Finance and Audit Committee asked that the Executive Team revise the Register in order to:

- Adjust the scoring system so that the effect of mitigating actions and controls can be clearly seen and the biggest residual net risks are better identified.
- Update departmental risk registers, with red risks being flagged to the Executive Team for discussion as part of the strategy.
- Include on the main risk register risks that are owned by individual functional areas but which would benefit from collective scrutiny.
- Include risks around major systems and processes which might be becoming out of date and not fit for purpose and so driving timely action.
- Specifically include Sense International, digital, systems and processes, people/recruitment and data security on the main risk register.

The new risk register was agreed by the Finance and Audit Committee at its July 2021 meeting. It is organised in broadly the same way as previously but is more focussed and better reflects current activity. There were no net risks rated as red in terms of impact and likelihood after controls and mitigating actions were taken into account.

COVID, which continues to be a major risk, and two risks with high ratings after mitigation are discussed below:

<b>Uncertainty/Risk</b>	<b>Possible Consequences</b>	<b>Controls being Implemented</b>
<b>COVID-19</b> Additional lockdowns that would	Lockdowns impact on the safety of individuals	We have established mechanisms in place to

<p>impact on recovery/full recovery from the pandemic and damage our future income streams</p>	<p>we support and sustainability of income streams.</p> <p>Commissioners may reduce funding and put at risk sustainability of services.</p> <p>Supporters may not give at the same level and there may be no more emergency funding streams available from central government.</p> <p>Charity shops have to shut again and fixed operating costs would lead to further losses in the Trading division</p>	<p>oversee our work and lead on strategy; clear and consistent leadership; regular review of cashflows and budgets, regular review of operational areas across charity; establishment of an (internal) Finance Committee and relevant sub groups, implemented a communication programme; review of health and safety and HR policies and procedures; scenario planning on strategy and priorities;</p>
<p><b>Staff</b> - We fail to have the rewards, training, selection processes or appeal to improve recruitment and retention</p>	<p>We might fail to attract the right talent and skills and fail to train those we do attract properly.</p> <p>Poor retention would mean our recruitment activity is high and expensive, and the turnover would be disruptive to service delivery making it difficult</p>	<p>We have an approach to reward and constantly review benefits.</p> <p>We have an L&amp;D strategy ready to approve.</p> <p>We are investing in an intranet project and a new HR data system.</p> <p>We are improving recruitment processes.</p>

	to achieve strategic goals in all areas without a committed and engaged workforce	We may need to consider more retention measures over the coming months.
<b>Income falls</b> - leading to net deficit for the year.	<p>Income and margins would decline and we would not achieve key financial targets.</p> <p>This could lead to a deficit for the year, impacting on our overall financial position and reserves.</p> <p>Bank loan covenants might be breached.</p>	<p>Strong reporting of management information and forecasts of cash flows mean the Executive Team can foresee problems and take proactive action to address a shortfall in income.</p> <p>The cost base is closely monitored and the Finance Committee challenge spend and target savings wherever possible. An Efficiency Group has been established to focus on several operational areas including fees, voids, and use of agency staff.</p>

## Energy and Carbon Report 2020/21

The table below summarises energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

### SENSE - GHG Emissions and Energy Use Data for Period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Energy/Activity	Scope - GHG Protocol Corporate Standard	Period 2020/21			Variance v 2019/20		
		kWh	tCO2e (gross)	% of Total	kWh	tCO2e (gross)	Varn %
Combustion of Natural Gas	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	4,720,980	868.0	42.7%	178,625	32.9	3.9%
Combustion of Oil	Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	169,215	41.7	2.0%	65,745	16.2	63.5%
Transport Own Vehicles (Diesel)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	1,204,731	289.8	14.2%	-1,135,077	-282.5	-48.5%
Transport Own Vehicles (Petrol)	Scope 1 (Direct emissions)	71,359	16.4	0.8%	-109,897	-26.0	-60.6%
	<b>Scope 1 - TOTALS</b>	<b>6,166,285</b>	<b>1,215.9</b>	<b>59.7%</b>	<b>-1,000,604</b>	<b>-259.5</b>	<b>-14.0%</b>
Electricity	Scope 2 (Energy Indirect)	3,129,097	729.5	35.9%	-999,336	-325.7	-24.2%
Transport - employee-owned vehicles business travel	Scope 3 (Other Indirect)	381,391	89.1	4.4%	-724,164	-174.1	-65.5%
<b>TOTALS (Gross)</b>		<b>9,676,772</b>	<b>2,034.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-2,724,105</b>	<b>-759.3</b>	<b>-22.0%</b>
<b>Buildings Intensity Ratio (kWh/m2 &amp; tCO2/m2)</b>		174	0.035		-149	-0.035	-46.2%
<b>Transport Intensity Ratio (kWh/FTE &amp; tCO2/FTE)</b>		972	0.232		-1,204	-0.295	-55.3%

### Emission Changes v 2019/20

It is recognised that due to the pandemic it has been an exceptional year and recorded reductions are mainly due to reduced activity. The increase in gas usage is believed to be due to the slightly colder year. Whilst oil is a small proportion of energy use, the high increase is believed to be due to the recording of data by bulk deliveries only and as such may not represent a true figure of actual consumption during the year.

### The Reporting period

The report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## **Organisational Boundaries**

We have used the Financial Control model as the basis to calculate our emissions, including everything that we own and operate within England & Wales.

## **Quantification and Reporting Methodology**

We have followed the UK HM Government “Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance March 2019”. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard.

Data has been gathered from the following sources:

**Gas Combustion** – Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.

**Oil Combustion** – Supplier delivery quantities (litres) for all fuels.

**Electricity** - Supplier invoices including a minor quantity of supplier estimated meter readings based on historical direct comparison and pro-rata extrapolation.

**Transport** – Own Fleet – Finance records for litres of fuel (Petrol & Diesel) purchased.

**Transport** – Business Mileage employee own vehicles – Individual employee expense claim records for business mileages during the reporting period. We have then used the “average car: unknown fuel” factors to calculate kWh & tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

In calculating the emissions we have used the UK Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, conversion factors 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2020>

## **Intensity Ratios**

For all our property energy usage we have chosen a ratio based on the Floor Area GIA.

For our transport energy usage we have chosen a ration based on our number of employees (FTE).

## **Energy Efficiency Action**

The pandemic has curtailed some of the plans we originally had in place. However, we are progressing our more strategic approach to asset management planning, particularly in terms of reducing our carbon footprint and energy consumption.

Gross internal floor areas have now been captured from our CAD drawings for all properties and our database has been populated with all utilities information including electricity, gas, and water consumption. This will enable us to highlight those properties that are inefficient in terms of energy use. It is intended that a dedicated budget be provided to undertake energy reduction projects identified using this information and fulfilling the appropriate business case criteria.

The organisation has acquired over 10 new shops during this period. As part of the fit-out of these properties we have included as part of the standard design brief LED lighting and enhanced heating controls.

Finally, the Pandemic has accelerated our approach to 'agile' working. A new policy has been introduced around this concept, and projects are in design stage to enable our IT infrastructure and office accommodation to further support this going forward. A consequence of this will be more efficient use of office space, and a corresponding reduction in travel. This will have a commensurate reduction in our carbon output and energy use.

## **Assurance & Verification**

This report and the verification of the data was undertaken by an external independent CIBSE qualified Low Carbon Consultant and ESOS Lead Assessor.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Council and signed on its behalf by:



**Dr Justin Molloy, Chair**

**22 September 2021**

## ***Independent auditors' report to the members of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association***

### ***Report on the audit of the financial statements***

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#### **Opinion**

In our opinion, Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association's group financial statements and parent charitable company financial statements (the "financial statements"):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the group's and parent charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, and of the group's cash flows for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", and applicable law); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Annual Report and Financial Statements (the "Annual Report"), which comprise: the consolidated balance sheet and company balance sheet as at 31 March 2021; the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated summary income and expenditure account and the consolidated cash flow statement for the year then ended; the accounting policies; and the notes to the financial statements.

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#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Independence**

We remained independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, which includes the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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#### **Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed,

we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

Based on our work undertaken in the course of the audit, the Companies Act 2006 requires us also to report certain opinions and matters as described below.

### *Strategic Report and Report of the Trustees*

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit the information given in the Report of the Trustees, including the Strategic Report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and the Strategic Report and the Report of the Trustees have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In addition, in light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we are required to report if we have identified any material misstatements in the Strategic Report and the Report of the Trustees. We have nothing to report in this respect.

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## **Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit**

### *Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements*

As explained more fully in the Statement of the responsibilities of the Council, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The trustees are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group and parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### *Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the group and charitable company/industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Charities Act 2011, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries and the manipulation of key accounting judgements and estimates. Audit procedures performed included:

- enquiry of management and the Council of Trustees, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Council of Trustees and its subcommittees, including the finance and audit committee;
- identifying and testing journal entries, including journal entries posted with unusual account combinations to cash or revenue; and
- assessing financial statement disclosures, and testing to supporting documentation, for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations or through collusion.

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association  
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditors' report.

### *Use of this report*

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the charity's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

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## **Other required reporting**

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### **Companies Act 2006 exception reporting**

Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- we have not obtained all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.



Daniel Chan (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
Birmingham  
22 September 2021

## Consolidated Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £000s	Restricted Funds £000s	Endowment Funds £000s	Total 2021 £000s	Total 2020 £000s
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and legacies	1	10,583	3,068	-	13,651	10,157
Charitable activities	1	49,738	1,452	-	51,190	48,509
Trading		4,475	-	-	4,475	10,635
COVID-19 grants	4	5,360	-	-	5,360	-
Investment income	3	120	6	-	126	46
Other income	4	415	11	-	426	528
<b>Total income</b>		<b>70,691</b>	<b>4,537</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,228</b>	<b>69,875</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Raising funds	5	3,965	45	-	4,010	4,162
Charitable activities		49,722	4,484	9	54,215	53,100
Trading		10,856	5	-	10,861	10,777
Other		1,247	-	-	1,247	1,434
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>65,790</b>	<b>4,534</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>70,333</b>	<b>69,473</b>
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	7	155	-	-	155	102
<b>Net income/(expense)</b>		<b>5,056</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>5,050</b>	<b>504</b>
Transfers between funds	18	(171)	171	-	-	-
<b>Net income</b>		<b>4,885</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>5,050</b>	<b>504</b>
Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme	11	(4,163)	-	-	(4,163)	(3,769)
<b>Net increase/ (decrease) in funds</b>	8	<b>722</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>(3,265)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in funds</b>						
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April		28,020	3,265	378	31,663	34,928
Net increase/ (decrease) in funds		722	174	(9)	887	(3,265)
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 31 March</b>	18,19	<b>28,742</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>32,550</b>	<b>31,663</b>

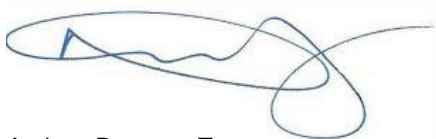
The net income of unrestricted funds is analysed between the general fund, designated funds and pension deficit in note 18.

## Consolidated balance sheet - as at 31 March 2021

	Notes	31 March 2021 £000s	31 March 2020 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	12	30,253	30,841
Investments	13	1	1
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>30,254</b>	<b>30,842</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		376	347
Debtors	14	9,207	9,796
Investments	15	4,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		15,586	8,153
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>29,169</b>	<b>22,296</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	16	(8,926)	(6,480)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>20,243</b>	<b>15,816</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	17	(7,913)	(8,383)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>42,584</b>	<b>38,275</b>
Provisions - pension	11	(10,034)	(6,612)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>32,550</b>	<b>31,663</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
General fund	18,19	28,238	24,935
Pension provision	18,19	(10,034)	(6,612)
Designated funds	18,19	10,538	9,697
Restricted funds	18,19	3,439	3,265
Endowment fund	18,19	369	378
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>32,550</b>	<b>31,663</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 107 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 71 to 107 were approved by Council on 22 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrew Pearson, Treasurer

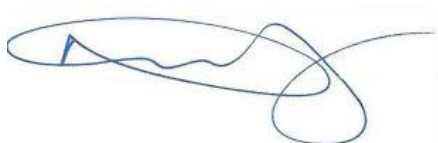
Registered company number 1825301

## Company balance sheet - as at 31 March 2021

	Notes	31 March 2021 £000s	31 March 2020 £000s
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	30,189	30,839
Investments	13	30	30
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>30,219</b>	<b>30,869</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock		376	347
Debtors	14	8,938	9,688
Investments	15	4,000	4,000
Cash at bank and in hand		14,487	6,713
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>27,801</b>	<b>20,748</b>
Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)	16	(8,807)	(6,383)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>18,994</b>	<b>14,365</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	17	(7,872)	(8,343)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>41,341</b>	<b>36,891</b>
Provisions - pension	11	(10,034)	(6,612)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>31,307</b>	<b>30,279</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>			
General fund	18,19	28,184	24,751
Pension provision	18,19	(10,034)	(6,612)
Designated funds	18,19	10,538	9,697
Restricted funds	18,19	2,249	2,065
Endowment fund	18,19	370	378
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>31,307</b>	<b>30,279</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 107 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 71 to 107 were approved by Council on 22 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrew Pearson, Treasurer

Registered company number 1825301

## Consolidated summary income and expenditure account - for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Income from continuing operations	75,257	69,930
Total expenditure of continuing operations	(69,983)	(69,094)
Operating surplus	5,274	836
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	155	102
Interest receivable and similar income	126	46
Interest payable and similar charges	(310)	(344)
Net interest and administration costs of defined benefit scheme	(195)	(136)
<b>Net income for the year</b>	<b>5,050</b>	<b>504</b>

## Consolidated cash flow statement - for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021	2020
		£000s	£000s
<b>Net cash inflow/ (outflow) from operating activities</b>	23	<b>10,134</b>	<b>(659)</b>
<b>Investing activities – investments</b>			
Interest received		125	46
Interest paid		(310)	(344)
<b>Investing activities – capital expenditure</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,612)	(3,003)
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		556	133
		<b>7,893</b>	<b>(3,827)</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>			
Bank loan repayments		(460)	(445)
<b>Increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>7,433</b>	<b>(4,272)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year		12,153	16,425
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year</b>	26	<b>19,586</b>	<b>12,153</b>

## **Accounting policies of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association**

### **Statement of compliance**

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Accounting and Reporting for Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, which is applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2020) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

In October 2020, a revised SORP was issued which is applicable to accounting periods commencing on or after 1 January 2020. The Directors have adopted the revised SORP for the first time in these financial statements which has had no impact on these financial statements other than certain additional or amended disclosures in the financial statements.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in section 408 of the Companies Act from presenting its individual statement of financial activities.

The net income of the charity for the year was £1,028,260 (2020: Deficit £3,426,335).

### **Public benefit entity**

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### **Preparation of the financial statements on a going concern basis**

The financial statements show that cash and reserves are at a healthy level, meaning that revenue expenditure including annual pension contributions and loan repayments can be comfortably covered in the future. The Trustees have reviewed budgets and forecasts which consider future activity and have also taken account of the risks that might threaten the expected position, with particular reference to the experiences of the pandemic year.

## **Accounting policies (continued)**

Trustees have also reviewed the risk register in detail during the year including a review of risk mitigation strategies. Together with our risk management policies, our strong reserves position allows the Trustees to conclude that the organisation will continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of this report and therefore it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

### **Group financial statements**

These financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiaries: Sense International, Helping Sense Limited, and Sense4Enterprise Limited.

### **Income recognition**

All income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Fees and allowances receivable for residential care and similar services are accounted for in the period in which the service is provided. Trading income represents goods supplied to customers at invoiced amounts and is recognised at point of sale. Legacy income is recognised on a receivable basis when it is probable that legacy income will be received and the value of the incoming resources can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants are recognised when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants received in advance with donor-imposed conditions that specify a time period in which the expenditure of resources can take place are accounted for as deferred income and recognised as a liability. Voluntary income is accounted for when received except when the income is related to major events. Non-cash donations, other than goods donated for sale through shops, are stated at an estimate of their value to the charity.

### **Expenditure**

All expenditure, including any irrecoverable VAT, is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category.

### **Accounting policies (continued)**

The cost of generating funds is the cost of organising fundraising events and activities and the cost of operating the charity's shops. The costs of charitable activities include all expenditure directly relating to the objects of the charity. Support costs have been apportioned to the relevant charitable activity on the basis of salary costs incurred.

Governance costs (internal and external audit, strategic costs and Trustees' expenses) are included in support costs.

Expenditure relating to redundancy and termination benefits is recognised once the decision to terminate has been made, it is probable that termination will occur, and the amount of the obligation can be measured.

#### **Job Retention Scheme grant income**

Sense applied for support through the Government Job Retention Scheme during the year. The grant was applied for as it became due, according to the claim cycle. Monies received are shown as income and gross payroll cost as expenditure. Accruals are made for grants claimed but outstanding at year end under this scheme.

#### **Retail Leisure and Hospitality grant income**

Sense applied for support through the Government Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund during the year in respect of the charity shops. Grants received are recognised as State Aid to the maximum permissible under UK legislation in any financial period. This grant has been recognised in other income (see note 4 below). No monies in respect of this grant were due or accrued for at 31 March.

#### **Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund grants**

The Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund supports adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not have a contract, to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience. Sense was eligible to claim this grant in respect of accommodation services. Income from this fund is shown in income, and the costs the grant covers are shown in expenditure. The grant is used to pay for additional infection control measures which include the cost of additional staffing including agency staff. Grants are only recognised in

### Accounting policies (continued)

income when returns have been made to, and accepted by, the distributing local authority as satisfactory proof that the grant has been spent in accordance with the stated criteria.

#### Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at historic purchase cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended use.

Using the following methods, depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful economic lives at the following annual rates:

Freehold property	2%
Short leasehold properties and long leasehold improvements	Over the remaining life of the lease
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Motor vehicles	25%

Freehold land is not depreciated. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are available for use. Individual fixed assets costing £500 or less are not capitalised.

#### Leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the statement of financial activities in equal amounts over the term of the lease.

#### Stock

Stock relates to new and second-hand items purchased for sale through the shops, valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. Other items, including donated goods and Sense merchandise are valued at nil, as their intrinsic value is immaterial or not possible to quantify.

#### Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when an obligation arises to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

## Accounting policies (continued)

### Dilapidations Provision

A provision is made for dilapidations in respect of leasehold properties, principally charity shops. The provision reflects an estimate of future costs to make good leased property upon the expiry of each lease and the elapsed period of the lease at the year end. Any excess provision is released on expiry of the individual property lease.

### Pension costs

The Group operates defined contribution schemes for all staff. Contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they are payable.

Pension costs in respect of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), which is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme, are accounted for as a defined contribution scheme and are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they are payable.

Pension costs in respect of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP), a defined benefit pension scheme closed to new members, are accounted for in accordance with FRS 102. As a result, the impacts of actuarial assumptions and amendments to benefits in respect of past service, expected investment return on assets of the fund and interest on pension liabilities, are charged to the statement of financial activities in the year.

Differences between actual and expected returns on assets during the year, together with differences arising from changes in the assumptions underlying the present value of scheme liabilities and experience of gains and losses arising on scheme liabilities, are also recognised in the statement of financial activities. The difference between the market value of assets and the present value of future pension liabilities is shown as a net liability on the balance sheet.

### Fixed assets: subsidiary undertakings

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated at cost but are written down to their realisable value if it is considered there has been a permanent diminution in their value.

## **Accounting policies (continued)**

### **Foreign currency**

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies have been translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date. Exchange differences are recognised within net income/(expenditure).

### **Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds are those that have been allocated by the Trustees for particular purposes as detailed in the funds note. Restricted funds are funds that are to be used in accordance with specific instructions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Endowment funds represent those assets that must be held permanently by the charity, principally properties. Any capital gains or losses arising form part of the fund.

Depreciation of endowed property is charged against the fund.

Investment income and gains are allocated to the appropriate fund.

### **Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

### **Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## Accounting policies (continued)

### Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Specific bad debts are recognised and provided for as appropriate.

## Principal accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of these accounting policies, management is required to make judgments, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates, and the estimates, along with their underlying assumptions, are continually reviewed. The matters below are considered to be the most important in understanding the judgments that are involved in preparing the financial statements and the uncertainties that could impact the amounts reported.

The following have been identified as a principal accounting estimate:

### Actuarial assumptions in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme

The liability arising from the defined benefit pension scheme is estimated based on a number of key assumptions which are disclosed in note 11.

These assumptions have been reviewed by the Group's actuaries and auditors.

### State Aid

A cap of £1.955m has been assumed to be the maximum State Aid (or subsidy) which can be recognised in the year to 31 March 2021 and the financial statements reflect this. The majority of State Aid received in the year was in connection with the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant in respect of the charity shops.

## Notes to the financial statements of Sense, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, for the year ended 31 March 2021

### 1. Income

<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Fundraising	9,591	7,430
Legacies	4,060	2,727
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,651</b>	<b>10,157</b>

<b>Income from charitable activities</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Care and Support Midlands	10,401	10,080
Care and Support East	11,015	13,075
Care and Support South	11,287	10,114
Care and Support North	9,147	7,588
Care and Support Northern Ireland	2,880	2,447
Care and Support Wales	1,559	1,376
Education and development programmes	3,512	2,176
International programmes	959	795
Arts and wellbeing programmes	224	514
Holidays and volunteering	200	329
Adult specialist services	4	9
Children's specialist services	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,190</b>	<b>48,509</b>

### 2. Grants receivable included within charitable activities

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Sense	2,306	1,297
Sense International	959	795
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>2,092</b>

All grants given for a specific purpose have been spent entirely on that purpose.

### 3. Investment income

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bank interest	126	46

## 4. Covid-19 Government Support Grants and Other income

### Covid-19 Government support grants

	2021 £000s	2020 £000s
Job Retention Scheme	2,624	-
Retail Leisure and Hospitality Grant	1,869	-
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	867	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,360</b>	<b>-</b>

### Other income

Other income is mainly derived from training, advice and consultancy provided to organisations and charities concerned with disability. It also includes income in relation to Sense Touch Base Pears which is mainly rental of office and conference space.

## 5. Expenditure

Activity	Direct costs £000s	Apportioned support costs £000s	2021 £000s	2020 £000s
Fundraising	3,824	191	4,015	4,162
Trading	10,276	585	10,861	10,777
TouchBase Pears	1,132	6	1,138	1,331
Care and Support Midlands	10,080	836	10,916	9,738
Care and Support East	9,858	900	10,758	10,680
Care and Support South	10,428	1,008	11,436	11,532
Care and Support North	7,654	752	8,406	8,691
Care and Support Northern Ireland	2,428	229	2,657	2,536
Care and Support Wales	1,526	143	1,669	1,513
Adult specialist services	585	66	651	742
Education and development programmes	1,543	290	1,833	2,232
International programmes	2,014	178	2,192	2,048
Arts and wellbeing programmes	588	53	641	553
Holidays and volunteering	825	63	888	1,002
Children's specialist services	612	58	670	475
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	1,030	79	1,109	1,031
Quality assurance and development	347	38	385	328
Other	108	-	108	102
	<b>64,858</b>	<b>5,475</b>	<b>70,333</b>	<b>69,473</b>

## 5. Expenditure (continued)

### Analysis of apportioned support costs

Activity	Facilities £000s	Manage't £000s	HR £000s	Finance £000s	Govern'e £000s	Comms £000s	2021 £000s	2020 £000s
Fundraising	10	15	60	66	1	63	215	205
Trading	-	-	43	-	-	-	43	43
TouchBase	-	-	2	2	-	2	6	18
Care and Support Midlands	45	65	260	287	2	272	931	873
Care and Support East	49	69	280	310	3	293	1,004	1,037
Care and Support South	55	78	314	347	3	328	1,125	1,017
Care and Support North	41	58	234	259	2	245	839	811
Care and Support Northern Ireland	12	18	71	78	1	75	255	232
Care and Support Wales	8	11	44	49	-	46	158	136
Adult specialist services	4	5	21	22	-	22	74	76
Education programmes	16	22	90	100	1	94	323	190
International programmes	-	154	-	-	24	-	178	176
Arts and wellbeing programmes	3	4	18	18	-	17	60	47
Holidays and volunteering	3	5	20	22	-	21	71	70
Children's specialist services	3	4	19	20	-	19	65	54
Campaigns, publicity and awareness	4	5	25	27	-	26	87	91
Quality assurance and development	2	2	13	13	-	11	41	34
	<b>255</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>1,514</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1,534</b>	<b>5,475</b>	<b>5,110</b>

## 6. Discontinued operations

There were no discontinued operations during the year.

## 7. Gains on sale of tangible fixed assets and investments

	2021 £000s	2020 £000s
Net gain on sale of tangible fixed assets	155	102

## 8. Net movements in funds

The net movement in funds is stated after charging:

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Audit fee Group	62	54
Audit fee Subsidiaries	6	10
Auditors – non audit fees	15	-
Depreciation – tangible assets	2,799	2,698
Operating lease rentals	4,157	3,656
Interest payable on bank loans	310	344

## 9. Employee remuneration

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	40,849	39,025
Social security costs	2,970	2,822
Termination and redundancy payments	55	26
Pension costs - defined contribution schemes	1,732	1,484
Pension costs - defined benefit scheme (see note 11)	936	1,283
	<b>46,542</b>	<b>44,640</b>

The average monthly number of employees – excluding volunteers – was 2,555 (2020: 2,446).

Sense Group employees earning over £60,000 were as follows:

	2021	2020
	Number	Number
£60,000 - £70,000	6	4
£70,000 - £80,000	2	3
£80,000 - £90,000	2	3
£90,000 - £100,000	2	-
£110,000 - £120,000	-	1
£120,000 - £130,000	1	1

Pension contributions for these employees were as follows:

	2021		2020	
	£000s	No.	£000s	No.
Defined contribution schemes	41	13	37	11

The aggregate remuneration of 10 key management personnel (2020: 9) as listed in the Trustees' Report, was £793,634 (2020: £680,271) before pension contributions of £41,211 (2020: £61,547).

## 10. Remuneration of members of Council

Trustees of Sense received no remuneration during the year (2020: £nil).

Trustees are reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and duties directly related to their duties as Trustees. In 2021, one (2020: nine) Trustee was reimbursed expenses of £70 (2020: £5,469).

## 11. Pensions

The Group provides defined contribution pension schemes for current employees.

In addition, the Group has ten employees who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The TPS is a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. Since the Group is unable to identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme, contributions to the TPS are accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme.

The Group participates in the Local Pensions Partnerships (LPP), formerly London Pension Fund Authority (LPFA), a scheme which provides benefits based on final pensionable pay in respect of employees' past service. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the participating employers and are mainly invested in equity investments and Government Securities. The most recent triennial actuarial valuation of the LPP was as at 31 March 2019.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the Group made agreed deficit reduction payments of £0.936 million (2020: £1.25 million). There was nothing outstanding at 31 March 2021 (2020: £nil).

## 11. Pensions (continued)

Pension liabilities measured in accordance with FRS 102 were:

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
<b>LPP scheme</b>		
Market value of assets	<b>44,237</b>	38,602
Present value of liabilities	<b>(54,143)</b>	(45,095)
LPP scheme - net deficit	<b>(9,906)</b>	(6,493)
Present value of an unfunded pension obligation	<b>(128)</b>	(119)
<b>Net pension fund liabilities</b>	<b>(10,034)</b>	(6,612)

## Financial assumptions

The principal assumptions used to calculate LPP scheme liabilities were as follows:

	At 31 March 2021	At 31 March 2020
	% pa	% pa
Rate of inflation – RPI	<b>3.2</b>	2.7
Rate of inflation – CPI	<b>2.8</b>	1.9
Rate of increase for pensions in payment	<b>2.8</b>	1.9
Discount rate	<b>2.0</b>	2.4

Life expectancy assumptions from age 65 were as follows:

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
- Men	<b>21.9</b>	21.2
- Women	<b>23.8</b>	23.8
Retiring in 20 years		
- Men	<b>23.0</b>	22.6
- Women	<b>25.5</b>	25.3

The post-retirement mortality assumptions are as follows:

- 2021: The post-retirement mortality tables have been constructed based on Club Vita analysis. These base tables are then projected using the CMI\_2020 Model, allowing for a long-term rate of improvement of 1.25% p.a.
- 2020: The post-retirement mortality tables have been constructed based on Club Vita analysis. These base tables are then projected using the CMI\_2018 Model, allowing for a long-term rate of improvement of 1.25% p.a.

## 11. Pensions (continued)

### Scheme assets

The assets attributable to the Group in the LPP were:

	Value at 31 March 2021 £'000	Value at 31 March 2020 £'000
Equities	24,035	20,833
Target return funds	10,412	9,946
Infrastructure	3,749	2,813
Property	4,025	3,832
Cash	2,016	1,178
	<b>44,237</b>	<b>38,602</b>

The actual investment return (on a bid value to bid value basis) for the year to 31 March 2021 was 15.6% (2020: 0%).

Equity investments in plan assets are quoted and valued at their bid price at March 2021.

### Reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Opening defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>45,214</b>	44,505
Interest cost	1,048	1,098
Benefits paid	(1,249)	(1,161)
Experience gain/ (loss) on defined benefit obligation	(710)	2,415
Change in financial assumptions	10,444	(3,000)
Change in demographic assumptions	(469)	1,364
Unfunded pension payments	(7)	(7)
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>54,271</b>	45,214

## 11. Pensions (continued)

### Reconciliation of fair value of scheme assets

	2021	2020
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>38,602</b>	40,548
Interest on assets	903	1,015
Return on assets less interest	5,095	(1,166)
Other actuarial losses	-	(1,831)
Administration expenses	(50)	(53)
Contributions by the employer	943	1,257
Benefits paid	(1,256)	(1,168)
<b>Closing fair value of fund assets</b>	<b>44,237</b>	38,602

The following components of the pensions charge have been recognised as operating costs in the statement of financial activities:

	2021	2020
	£'000	£'000
Net interest	145	83
Administration expenses	50	53
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>195</b>	136

### Re-measurements in other comprehensive income

	2021	2020
	£'000	£'000
Return on fund assets in excess of / (below) assumption	5,095	(1,166)
Other actuarial losses	-	(1,831)
Changes in demographic assumptions	469	(1,364)
Changes in financial assumptions	(10,444)	3,000
Experience gain / (loss) on defined benefit obligation	710	(2,415)
<b>Total actuarial loss recognised</b>	<b>(4,170)</b>	(3,776)
Deficit reduction payments made	7	7
<b>Net actuarial loss</b>	<b>(4,163)</b>	(3,769)

## 11. Pensions (continued)

### Sensitivity analysis of scheme liabilities

The following table sets out the impact of changes in the discount rates on the present value pension obligation and projected service cost and a one year age rating adjustment to the mortality assumption.

	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1%	0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	53,279	54,271	55,283
Projected service cost	-	-	-
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	+1 year	None	-1 year
Present value of total obligation	56,756	54,271	51,899
Projected service cost	-	-	-

## 12. Tangible assets

<b>Group</b>	<b>Freehold property £000s</b>	<b>Long leasehold improvements £000s</b>	<b>Short leasehold improvements £000s</b>	<b>Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s</b>	<b>Motor vehicles £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2020	25,093	3,887	2,796	18,184	3,610	53,570
Additions	20	-	900	1,430	262	2,612
Disposals	(344)	-	(50)	(2,009)	(295)	(2,698)
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>24,769</b>	<b>3,887</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>17,605</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>53,484</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2020	3,519	749	1,795	13,812	2,854	22,729
Charge for the year	445	62	237	1,737	318	2,799
Disposals	(63)	-	(46)	(1,908)	(280)	(2,297)
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>3,901</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>13,641</b>	<b>2,892</b>	<b>23,231</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>20,868</b>	<b>3,076</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>3,964</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>30,253</b>
At 31 March 2020	21,574	3,138	1,001	4,372	756	30,841
<b>Company</b>						
<b>Company</b>	<b>Freehold property £000s</b>	<b>Long leasehold improvements £000s</b>	<b>Short leasehold improvements £000s</b>	<b>Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000s</b>	<b>Motor vehicles £000s</b>	<b>Total £000s</b>
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 April 2020	25,093	3,887	2,796	18,159	3,568	53,503
Additions	20	-	900	1,423	203	2,546
Disposals	(344)	-	(50)	(2,010)	(296)	(2,700)
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>24,769</b>	<b>3,887</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>17,572</b>	<b>3,475</b>	<b>53,349</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 April 2020	3,519	749	1,795	13,790	2,811	22,664
Charge for the year	445	62	237	1,736	313	2,793
Disposals	(63)	-	(46)	(1,908)	(280)	(2,297)
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>3,901</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>13,618</b>	<b>2,844</b>	<b>23,160</b>
<b>Net book amounts</b>						
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>20,868</b>	<b>3,076</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>3,954</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>30,189</b>
At 31 March 2020	21,574	3,138	1,001	4,369	757	30,839

### 13. Fixed asset investments

Group	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
UK listed investments (at market value)	1	1
<b>Company</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£000s	£000s
Paid up shares: 100% (2020: 100%) holding in Helping Sense Limited	30	30

The company owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of Helping Sense Limited, which is incorporated in England and Wales, and exists to raise funds for the company. There is no readily available market value for the company and accordingly it is accounted for at cost.

The Trustees believe that the carrying value of the investment is supported by the underlying net assets. (Note 29).

### 14. Debtors

Group	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Trade debtors	4,360	5,693
Accrued income	1,430	1,837
Prepayments	2,401	1,838
Taxation recoverable	161	147
Other debtors	855	281
	9,207	9,796
<b>Company</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	£000s	£000s
Trade debtors	4,360	5,693
Accrued income	1,232	1,742
Prepayments	2,390	1,829
Amounts owed by group undertakings	140	205
Taxation recoverable	161	147
Other debtors	655	72
	8,938	9,688

Trade debtors are shown net of bad and doubtful debt provisions of £197,738 (2020: £226,000).

## 15. Current asset investments

<b>Group and Company</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank deposits	<b>4,000</b>	4,000

## 16. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	<b>470</b>	459
Trade creditors	<b>1,681</b>	2,001
Taxation and social security	<b>711</b>	666
Deferred income	<b>1,002</b>	591
Accruals and deferred income	<b>5,062</b>	2,763
	<b>8,926</b>	6,480

<b>Company</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	<b>470</b>	459
Trade creditors	<b>1,675</b>	2,000
Taxation and social security	<b>711</b>	666
Deferred income	<b>997</b>	586
Accruals and deferred income	<b>4,954</b>	2,672
	<b>8,807</b>	6,383

## 17. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)

<b>Group</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	<b>7,873</b>	8,343
Other creditors	<b>40</b>	40
	<b>7,913</b>	8,383

<b>Company</b>	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Bank loans	<b>7,872</b>	8,343

The bank loan, which funded the construction of TouchBase Pears, is with Lloyds Bank PLC. The loan is unsecured and repayable in instalments over 16 years to 2035. Interest is fixed on the first £7 million drawdown at 4.17% for the first eight years. Interest on the remaining drawdown is variable, based on a margin of 2% above three-month LIBOR.

## 17. Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year) (continued)

Repayments fall due as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Within one year	470	459
Second to fifth year	2,005	1,960
After five years	5,867	6,383
	<b>8,342</b>	<b>8,802</b>

At 31 March 2021 the Group had no obligations under finance leases (2020: £nil).

## 18. Movement of funds

Group	Balance at 1 April 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2021
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	24,935	70,792	(66,186)	(1,303)	28,238
Designated funds	9,697	54	(345)	1,132	10,538
Pension deficit (note 11)	(6,612)	-	(3,422)	-	(10,034)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>28,020</b>	<b>70,846</b>	<b>(69,953)</b>	<b>(171)</b>	<b>28,742</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cymru Fundraising Fund	16	6	-	-	22
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	-	26
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	23	-	(23)	-	-
Touchbase Wales General Donations	18	3	(20)	-	1
Community Connections	108	-	-	-	108
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	22	1	-	-	23
Student Fund - 53a Shipdham Rd	18	-	-	-	18
Children's Services	-	171	(46)	-	125
Children's Services: South East	-	61	(7)	-	54
Children's Services: South West	16	6	(11)	-	11
Sport England - Active Together	195	207	(288)	-	114
Arts & Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive	43	50	(32)	-	61
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	57	-	-	-	57
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	24	-	2	-	26
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	41	-	6	-	47
Big Lottery Fund Grant	30	172	(140)	-	62
Children's Services North	-	18	(1)	-	17
Cornwall GOT Project	38	1	(1)	-	38

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<b>Group</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Cymru general donations	18	-	-	-	18
Deafblind Studies	6	-	-	-	6
Needs and Numbers Survey	56	(1)	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	77	31	(1)	-	107
Northern Ireland Lottery guide dogs	45	31	(12)	-	64
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	91	26	(25)	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	145	20	(33)	-	132
Northern Ireland specialist services	31	-	-	-	31
Social Prescribing Service	36	-	(36)	-	-
Stevenage Special Donations	32	-	(1)	-	31
TBP day centre equipment appeal	39	(25)	-	-	14
The Big Give	3	-	(3)	-	-
The Devon Group Fund	29	2	(30)	-	1
TouchBase Restricted Fund	4	1	-	-	5
Volunteering: London transitions	74	61	(89)	-	46
Wolverhampton Children's Services	35	-	-	-	35
Woodside Fund	13	-	(13)	-	-
Children's Services Midlands	-	32	(26)	-	6
DoH Health and Wellbeing Alliance	-	20	(20)	-	-
TouchBase Wales Lottery Grant	-	100	(65)	-	35
Woodside – Capital (*)	12	-	21	-	33
NI Mallusk Nursery (*)	15	30	(19)	-	26
GOT Group Warwickshire (*)	15	30	(9)	-	36
Andlaw House (*)	19	-	20	-	39
SE Barnet Day Service Special Donations (*)	20	-	(20)	-	-
NI Outreach Worker (*)	20	-	-	-	20
Woodside – Operations (*)	24	1	18	-	43
Arts and Wellbeing: Digital Programme	-	55	(27)	-	28
Arts Council: TBP Studio Development #2	-	25	-	-	25
Children in Need Next Steps Programme	-	29	(27)	-	2
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	-	50	(17)	-	33
DHSC: COVID-19 Support	-	345	(345)	-	-
Loneliness Fund (DCMS)	-	500	(500)	-	-
NLCF Covid-19 Grant	-	510	(510)	-	-
Pears Grant – Promoting Wellbeing	-	40	(32)	-	8

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<b>Group</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Woodside IT Equipment (*)	5	16	(21)	-	-
Other	526	154	(212)	-	468
<b>Sense International</b>					
Nelumbo Stiftung Education	251	173	(217)	-	207
Romania – In-country Income	73	50	(22)	-	101
FCDO UK Aid Match Kenya	20	107	(41)	-	86
Comic Relief Uganda	-	117	(38)	-	79
Nelumbo Stiftung Early Intervention Uganda	-	75	-	-	75
FCDO UK Aid Match Bangladesh	41	64	(37)	-	68
Latin American Children's Trust	50	50	(39)	-	61
Thomas Cook Children's Charity	82	-	(22)	-	60
NLCF Uganda	120	27	(88)	-	59
My Turn to Learn Appeal	144	28	(114)	-	58
Enabel Vocational	181	1	(133)	-	49
Tanzania Adults Vocational	36	68	(59)	-	45
Porticus Uganda 2020-21	-	51	(16)	-	35
Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa Uganda	9	38	(18)	-	29
The Batchworth Trust (Nepal)	12	12	-	-	24
Tanzania Early Intervention	26	84	(89)	-	21
Jersey Overseas Aid Nepal	9	98	(90)	-	17
Australian Embassy Tanzania	22	-	(6)	-	16
Tanzania HDIF	14	40	(45)	-	9
Romania Orange E-Sense	16	30	(41)	-	5
FCDO Rapid Response Fund Kenya 2020	-	123	(123)	-	-
FCDO UK Aid Direct Kenya	3	142	(145)	-	-
FCDO UK Aid Direct Kenya Co-funding	-	11	(11)	-	-
FCDO (UK Aid Match) Kenya Early Intervention	-	74	(74)	-	-
DID TO35	-	92	(92)	-	-
Else Krone Fresenius	-	24	(24)	-	-
Allan & Nesta Ferguson Fdn	-	24	(24)	-	-
Tanzania Holding Fund	-	1	(86)	85	-
Uganda Holding Fund	-	2	(55)	53	-
Kenya Holding Fund	-	14	(30)	16	-
Peru Holding Fund	-	-	(26)	26	-
Other	91	138	(134)	(9)	86

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<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>4,537</b>	<b>(4,534)</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>3,439</b>
<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	378	-	(9)	-	369
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>369</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>31,663</b>	<b>75,383</b>	<b>(74,496)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,550</b>

\* - balance previously disclosed in other

<b>Company</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>
	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General fund, excluding pension deficit	24,751	70,573	(66,008)	(1,132)	28,184
Designated funds	9,697	54	(345)	1,132	10,538
Pension deficit (note 11)	(6,612)	-	(3,422)	-	(10,034)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>27,836</b>	<b>70,627</b>	<b>(69,775)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28,688</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Cymru Fundraising Fund	17	6	-	-	23
TouchBase Pears Aspirations	26	-	-	-	26
Dual Sensory Impairment Clinic	23	-	(23)	-	-
Touchbase Wales General Donations	18	3	(20)	-	1
Community Connections	108	-	-	-	108
Student Fund - Newton Court 1-4	22	1	-	-	23
Student Fund - 53a Shipdham Rd	18	-	-	-	18
Children's Services	-	171	(46)	-	125
Children's Services: South East	-	61	(7)	-	54
Children's Services: South West	15	6	(11)	-	10
Sport England - Active Together	195	207	(288)	-	114
Arts & Wellbeing: TBP Inclusive	43	50	(32)	-	61
Southeast: Sense @ Keech	56	-	-	-	56
Anne Wall Centre (TBSE)	23	-	2	-	25
Cafe 55 -Providence Court	41	-	6	-	47
Big Lottery Fund Grant	30	172	(140)	-	62
Children's Services North	-	18	(1)	-	17
Cornwall GOT Project	38	1	(1)	-	38
Cymru general donations	18	-	-	-	18
Deafblind Studies	6	-	-	-	6
Needs and Numbers Survey	56	(1)	-	-	55
Northern Ireland Day Centre	77	31	(1)	-	107

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Company	Balance at 1 April 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2021
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Northern Ireland Lottery guide dogs	45	31	(12)	-	64
Northern Ireland Out Of Schools Club	91	26	(25)	-	92
Northern Ireland Special Donations	145	20	(33)	-	132
Northern Ireland specialist services	31	-	-	-	31
Social Prescribing Service	36	-	(36)	-	-
Stevenage Special Donations	32	-	(1)	-	31
TBP day centre equipment appeal	39	(25)	-	-	14
The Big Give	3	-	(3)	-	-
The Devon Group Fund	29	2	(30)	-	1
TouchBase Restricted Fund	4	1	-	-	5
Volunteering: London transitions	75	61	(89)	-	47
Wolverhampton Children's Services	35	-	-	-	35
Woodside Fund	13	-	(13)	-	-
Children's Services Midlands	-	32	(26)	-	6
DoH Health and Wellbeing Alliance	-	20	(20)	-	-
TouchBase Wales Lottery Grant	-	100	(65)	-	35
Woodside – Capital (*)	12	-	21	-	33
NI Mallusk Nursery (*)	15	30	(19)	-	26
GOT Group Warwickshire (*)	15	30	(9)	-	36
Andlaw House (*)	19	-	20	-	39
SE Barnet Day Service Special Donations (*)	20	-	(20)	-	-
NI Outreach Worker (*)	20	-	-	-	20
Woodside – Operations (*)	24	1	18	-	43
Arts and Wellbeing: Digital Programme	-	55	(27)	-	28
Arts Council: TBP Studio Development #2	-	25	-	-	25
Children in Need Next Steps Programme	-	29	(27)	-	2
Children's Services: Sweeney Foundation	-	50	(17)	-	33
DHSC: COVID-19 Support	-	345	(345)	-	-
Loneliness Fund (DCMS)	-	500	(500)	-	-
NLCF Covid-19 Grant	-	510	(510)	-	-
Pears Grant – Promoting Wellbeing	-	40	(32)	-	8
Woodside IT Equipment (*)	5	16	(21)	-	-
Other	527	154	(212)	-	469
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,065</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>(2,595)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,249</b>

<b>Endowment</b>					
Property	378	-	(8)	-	370
<b>Total Endowment</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>30,279</b>	<b>73,406</b>	<b>(72,378)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31,307</b>

Individual funds listed are those with opening balances, annual income or annual expenditure that exceed £20,000. 'Other funds' are those with opening balances, annual income and annual expenditure of less than £20,000.

## Unrestricted funds

### General fund

This represents the accumulated reserves of the charity that are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees.

### Designated funds

Designated funds total £10.5m (2020: £9.7m).

Designated funds include £3.8 million for the maintenance and improvement of the Group's residential accommodation, two years' of contributions to Sense International (£0.7m), for the support and development of Sense Touch Base Pears centre (£1.0m) and a full year of pension deficit reduction payments (£1.0m).

Future strategic plans will be funded from reserves and Trustees have designated funds for the following projects: £1.5m for business acquisitions, £1.0m for infrastructure development and £1.0m for investment in the current financial year on innovation projects. In addition, £0.5m has been designated for the acquisition of the assets and activity of the Otterhayes Trust which took place during April 2021.

### Pension deficit

See note 11 for the calculation of the estimated deficit on the defined benefit scheme.

### Restricted funds

Sense is reliant on the support of individuals, corporations, trusts, other charities and state bodies in order to deliver our activities. Monies that are received for an express purpose are restricted to that purpose.

## 18. Movement of funds (continued)

The principal restricted funds are considered to be:

### **Sense TouchBase Pears**

This is a facility in Selly Oak, Birmingham which was completed at the end of 2018. This multi-purpose building provides capacity for day services, office space for Sense staff and recently opened Sense college, as well as offering a hub and facilities for community use and commercial hire.

### **Community Connections**

A legacy to reduce social isolation for adults with sensory impairments, connect people in Wales to their local community, to build connections with others, share experiences, improve confidence and well-being.

### **Sport England**

A three-year project to build on our foundations of supporting people with complex disabilities to get active.

### **Sense Holidays fund**

Money donated to enable children and adults to participate in holidays, supported by volunteers.

### **Big Lottery Fund (Uganda)**

A three-year grant was received from the Big Lottery Fund to improve the livelihoods of people with deafblindness in Uganda.

### **Big Lottery Fund (Peru)**

A three-year grant was received from the Big Lottery Fund to improve opportunities for people with deafblindness in Peru.

### **Finding Grace appeal**

Monies raised by the appeal to match the funding provided by the Department for International Development (DFID). This fund is for establishing early intervention services for infants born with or acquiring sensory impairments in Kenya and Uganda.

### **Endowment funds**

These are properties given to the charity for its use. The movement on the fund is depreciation of the fixed assets.

## 18. Movement of funds (continued)

### Transfers between funds

Other transfers between funds represent either transfers from unrestricted funds to cover shortfalls of restricted funds or transfers from restricted funds to cover related expenditure paid by unrestricted monies.

## 19. Analysis of net assets between fund balances

Group	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	29,884	-	-	369	30,253
Fixed asset investments	1	-	-	-	1
Net current assets	6,266	10,538	3,439	-	20,243
Long-term liabilities	(7,913)	-	-	-	(7,913)
Pension liability	(10,034)	-	-	-	(10,034)
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,204</b>	<b>10,538</b>	<b>3,439</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>32,550</b>

Company	Unrestricted funds £000s	Designated funds £000s	Restricted funds £000s	Endowment funds £000s	Total funds £000s
Tangible fixed assets	29,819	-	-	370	30,189
Fixed asset investments	30	-	-	-	30
Net current assets	6,207	10,538	2,249	-	18,994
Long-term liabilities	(7,872)	-	-	-	(7,872)
Pension liability	(10,034)	-	-	-	(10,034)
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,150</b>	<b>10,538</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>31,307</b>

## 20. Capital commitments

As at 31 March 2021, the Group had capital commitments of £5,689 (2020: £57,928).

## 21. Contingent liabilities

Sense, Sense International and Helping Sense Limited are members of a group VAT registration. Under the Value Added Tax Act 1983, all members of a VAT group are jointly and severally liable for any tax due during the period of their membership.

As disclosed in Note 29, two of the Company's subsidiaries, Helping Sense Limited and Sense4Enterprise Limited, have taken advantage of the exemption available under Section 479 of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the requirement for audit. As a

condition of the exemption, the Company has guaranteed the year-end liabilities of the relevant subsidiaries until they are settled in full. The liabilities of one of the subsidiaries (Sense4Enterprise Limited) at the year-end were £107,000 (2020: £91,000). The Trustees are satisfied that this does not impact on the going concern position of the Group and believe that this is an accurate and robust guarantee. The other subsidiary (Helping Sense Limited) had assets of £30,000 (2020: £30,000) at 31 March.

## 22. Operating lease commitments

Future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

Group and Company	2021		2020	
	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s	Land and buildings £000s	Other £000s
Operating leases which expire:				
Within one year	3,132	-	3,222	-
In two to five years	9,329	-	9,178	-
After five years	6,385	-	7,246	-
	<b>18,846</b>	-	19,646	-

## 23. Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities

	2021 £000s	2020 £000s
Net income before revaluation	5,050	504
Defined benefit pension scheme deficit reduction payments	(741)	(1,114)
Investment income received	(125)	(46)
Interest paid	310	344
Depreciation	2,799	2,698
Profit on sale of fixed assets	(155)	(102)
Increase in stock	(29)	(95)
Decrease/ (increase) in debtors	589	(3,215)
Increase in creditors	2,436	367
<b>Net cash inflow/ (outflow) from operating activities</b>	<b>10,134</b>	<b>(659)</b>

## 24. Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net cash

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000s</b>	£000s
Increase / (decrease) in cash in the year	7,433	(4,272)
Bank loan repayments	459	445
<b>Changes generate from / (used in) cash flows</b>	<b>7,892</b>	<b>(3,827)</b>
Net cash at 1 April 2020/2019	3,352	7,179
<b>Net cash at 31 March</b>	<b>11,244</b>	<b>3,352</b>

## 25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	<b>At 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>Non-cash changes</b>	<b>At 31 March 2021</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Cash at bank and in hand	8,153	7,433	-	15,586
Current asset investments	4,000	-	-	4,000
Debt due within one year	(458)	459	(471)	(470)
Debt due after one year	(8,343)	-	471	(7,872)
	<b>3,352</b>	<b>7,892</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,244</b>

## 26. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Cash at bank and in hand	15,586	8,153
Current asset investments	4,000	4,000
	<b>19,586</b>	<b>12,153</b>

## 27. Related party transactions

In some cases, the Group provides services to children or family members of the Trustees and Board members of the charity. These services are provided as part of the contracts agreed with funding authorities on the same commercial terms as with any other service user.

During the previous year Sense International a subsidiary of the group entered into a loan of £40,000 which was received from Dandyllion Consulting Limited, a company of which Sunil Shah, a trustee of Sense International, was a Director in the year. The loan is unsecured, interest free, and repayable in five equal annual instalments from March 2023.

## 27. Related party transactions (cont'd)

Balances with subsidiaries are disclosed below;

	31 March 2021 Debtor/(Creditor) £	31 March 2020 Debtor/(Creditor) £
Sense International	36,536	115,836
Helping Sense Limited	(31)	(4,503)
Sense4Enterprise Limited	107,541	93,585

### Support for Sense International

During the year, the company made a donation of £350,000 (2020: £40,777) to Sense International.

For much of the year to March 2021 five shops run by the company designated as Sense International shops were closed due to the pandemic and made a loss. Accordingly there was no donation in the year from Sense in respect of net profit generated by these shops (2020: £122,861). In addition, in the year ended 31 March 2020, the company donated the proceeds of sales in all its shops donated as part of the Chance to Shine Appeal for Sense International, amounting to £199,223. These amounts are included in donations and legacies.

Helping Sense Limited made a donation to the company of nil (2020: £85,108 in relation to profits made in the previous year).

## 28. Note on company status

Sense is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of the members is limited by guarantee. The members have undertaken to contribute such amount not exceeding one pound each as may be required in the event of the charity being wound up.

## 29. Subsidiary companies

The company has three wholly owned subsidiaries including Sense International which is registered in England as a charity (charity number: 1076497) and as a company limited by guarantee (company number: 03742986).

Sense is connected to the Royal Coventry Society for the Blind. The Charity Commissioners directed in a letter dated 04 June 2003 that this Charity should be reported as part of Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association. There have been no activities separately undertaken by this Charity.

Sense International has similar aims and objectives to the company. All activities have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis into the statement of financial activities.

A summary of the results of the subsidiary are shown below:

### **Sense International**

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Income	2,320	2,476
Expenditure	(2,455)	(2,295)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(135)</b>	181
Assets	1,439	1,632
Liabilities	(191)	(248)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,248</b>	1,384

Sense also has two wholly owned subsidiaries that are not registered charities.

Sense owns the whole of the issued share capital of Helping Sense Limited, a company registered in England (company number: 2214430) that is used for non-primary purpose trading activities, namely the support of shop sales of purchased goods and the organisation of fundraising activities. The net profit of the subsidiary is gifted to the company. Sense4Enterprise Limited (company number: 8112973) is a company limited by guarantee and a social enterprise and is used for income generating activities related to

Sense TouchBase Pears and other resources. The net profit of Sense4Enterprise Limited will be gifted to the charity.

A summary of the results of these subsidiaries is shown below:

### Helping Sense Limited

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Turnover	1,273	3,281
Cost of sales	(306)	(440)
Gross profit	967	2,841
Operating expenses	(967)	(2,841)
<b>Net profit</b>	-	-
Assets	35	35
Liabilities	(5)	(5)
<b>Net assets</b>	30	30

### Sense4Enterprise Limited

	2021	2020
	£000s	£000s
Income	124	262
Expenditure	(137)	(290)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	(13)	(28)
Assets		-
Liabilities	(107)	(91)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	(107)	(91)

The Company has guaranteed the liabilities of Sense4Enterprise Limited and Helping Sense Limited to entitle them to exemption from audit under Section 479A of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the year ended 31 March 2021.

### 30. Post balance sheet events

On 14 April 2021, Sense acquired the assets and ongoing trading activity of Otterhayes Trust for a consideration of £526,894 settled by the assumption of bank loans which have subsequently been repaid. The fair value of the net assets acquired significantly exceeds the consideration paid and will be reflected in the accounts in the current year.

On 15th September 2021 Sense repaid £2,301,000 of the loan detailed in note 17 above.

## Other information

### Major supporters of Sense in 2020/21

#### Sense

Alex de Winton  
Arts Council England  
Audrey Earle Charitable Trust  
BBC Children In Need  
Birkdale Trust for Hearing Impaired Ltd  
Cameron Homes  
Cantiacorum Foundation  
Catherine Paul  
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Department of Health & Social Care  
Erica Wax  
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Pamela Coate  
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Stuart and Joanna Riley  
Sweeney Foundation  
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The Ballinger Charitable Trust  
The Barbour Foundation  
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The Essex Youth Trust  
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The Geoffrey Watling Charity  
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The Helen Jean Cope Trust  
The J & M Britton Charitable Trust  
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The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust  
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The Sheila Hasler Charitable Trust  
The Sir John Eastwood Foundation  
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The Strangward Trust  
The Tanner Trust  
The Thomas Farr Charity  
The Thomas J Horne Memorial Trust  
The Violet Helen Dixon Charitable Trust  
The Vision Foundation  
The Weinstock Fund  
The William Kenneth Hutchings Charitable Trust  
The Wixamtree Trust  
The Wolfson Foundation  
Tim Watts  
Williams Family Foundation  
Winifred Eileen Kemp Trust

### Sense International

Comic Relief (directly to Sense International Uganda)  
Dorfred Charitable Trust  
Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency (funded by the European Union) (directly to Sense International Kenya)  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)  
Green Hall Foundation  
Guernsey Overseas Aid and Development Commission  
Hollyhock Charitable Foundation  
James Tudor Foundation  
Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa (KBTA)  
Latin American Children's Trust  
Love is Kindness Charitable Trust  
Medicor Foundation

Members of the Sense International Ambassador Circle

Mrs J B Wood's Charitable Trust

Nelumbo Stiftung

Old Mutual Trust Fund

Rhododendron Trust

Rupin and Madhavi Vadera

Souter Charitable Trust

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

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The Band Aid Charitable Trust

The Beatrice Laing Trust

The Batchworth Trust

The Blackwood Engineering Trust

The British and Foreign School Society

The Carmen Butler-Charteris Trust

The Cumber Family Charitable Trust

The Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung

The Grace Trust

The Jersey Overseas Aid Commission

The National Lottery Community Fund

The Open Society Initiative for East Africa (directly to Sense International Kenya)

The Tony and Audrey Watson Charitable Trust

Uganda Society for Disabled Children (funded by UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund)

Ulverscroft Foundation

## Charity information

### Registered address

101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG

**Tel:** 0300 330 9250

**Email:** facilities@sense.org.uk

### Sense Information and Advice

For details about the support and services Sense offers – and information about complex disabilities – please contact the Sense Information and Advice service on:

**Tel:** 0300 330 9256

**Textphone:** 0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972

**Email:** info@sense.org.uk

### Professional advisers

#### Independent auditors

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

One Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3AX

#### Bankers

National Westminster Bank PLC

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JA

Lloyds Banking Group plc

33 Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1HZ

#### Solicitors

Wilson's Solicitors LLP

Alexandra House

St John Street

Salisbury SP1 2SB

Trowers & Hamblins LLP

3 Bunhill Row

London

EC1Y 8YZ

Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP

134 Edmund Street,

Birmingham, B3 2ES

#### Insurance advisers

Willis Towers Watson

Belvedere, 12 Booth Street,

Manchester, M2 4AW

Sense, The National Deafblind and Rubella Association  
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

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Websites: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)  
<https://www.senseinternational.org.uk>

### **Sense Northern Ireland**

Sense Family Centre  
The Manor House  
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Mallusk  
County Antrim, BT37 9AA  
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Fax: 028 9084 4232  
Email: [nienquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:nienquiries@sense.org.uk)

### **Sense Cymru**

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Caerphilly, CF83 3ED  
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Ffacs/fax: 0300 330 9281  
Testud/text: 0300 330 9282  
Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)

Sense: Registered number 1825301  
Registered charity number 289868