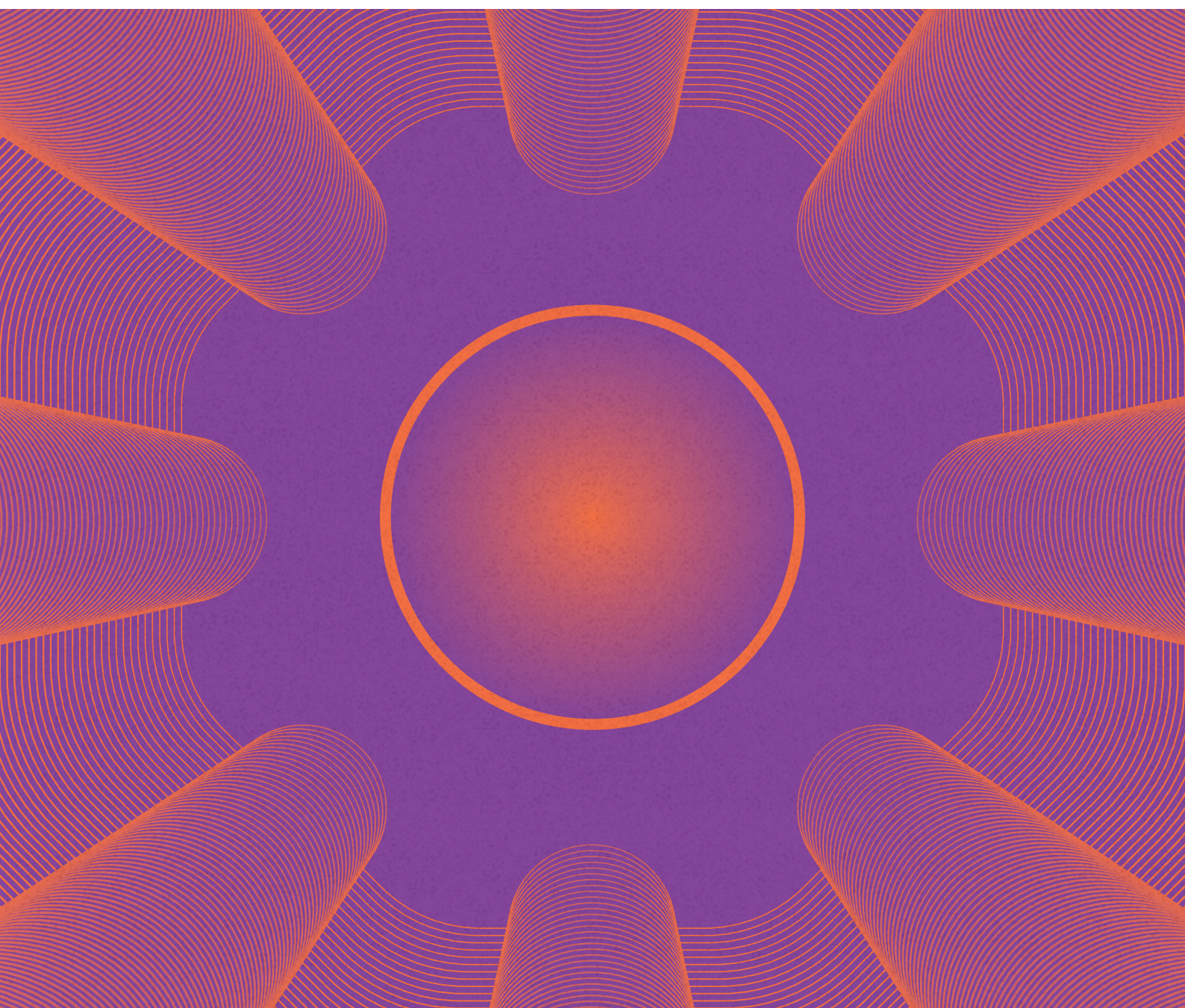


Impact report 2024—25

Our journey of growth





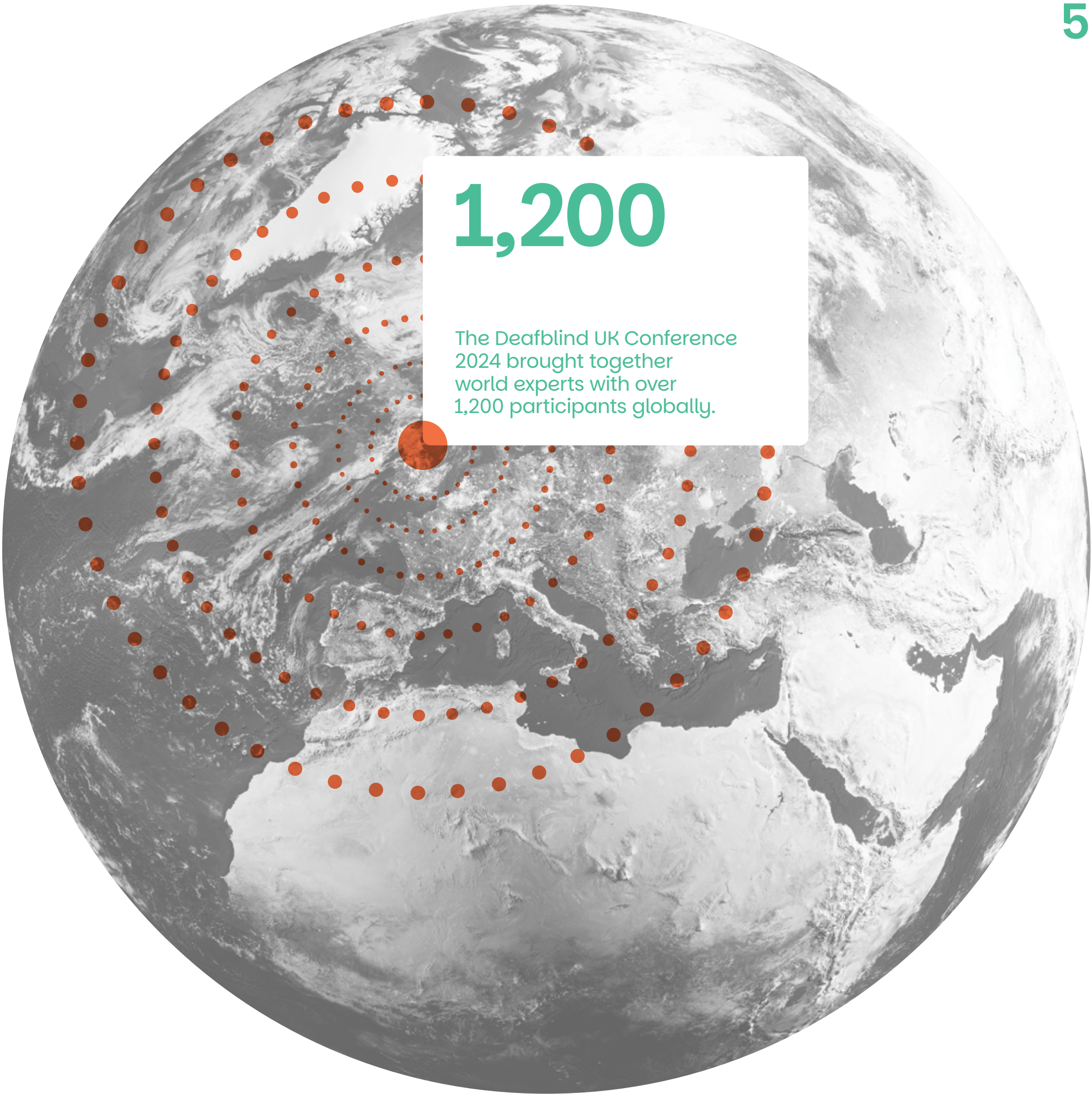
We are the National Charity that only specialises in supporting people who are deafblind in the UK.

Over the past year, we've expanded our services to better support individuals living with deafblindness. Our initiatives in education, research, and technology have empowered more people to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

Notably, our collaboration with Birmingham City University is a game changer in the advancement of research and education provision in the UK and beyond.

Our commitment to advocacy has also strengthened. By engaging with policymakers and participating in international forums, we've worked to ensure that the voices of those with dual sensory loss are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

The Deafblind UK Conference 2024, themed 'Standing Out and Fitting In', exemplified this effort, bringing together world experts with over 1,200 participants globally to share experiences and strategies.



01 Welcome

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters. Your unwavering commitment enables us to continue our mission and adapt to the evolving needs of our members.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on enhancing our services, fostering innovation, and advocating for greater awareness and inclusion. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those impacted by deafblindness.

Thank you for your continued support.



Robert Nolan
Chairperson,
Deafblind UK

R. Nolan



Nikki Morris
CEO,
Deafblind UK

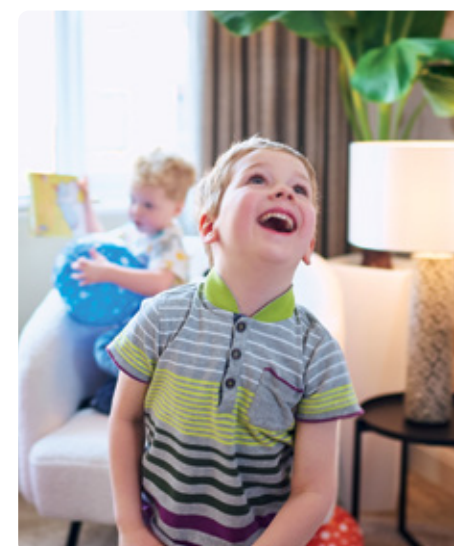
Nikki Morris



“ Nothing compares to being able to talk to someone who faces the same challenges as you every day. Thank you for everything you do.”

02 Our purpose

We are here for the growing number of people whose lives are affected by deafblindness. We support people at every stage of their journey and help them to continue to lead their life in the way they want to, beyond sight and hearing loss.



Over 450,000 people are affected by deafblindness in the UK and this number is rising every day.

That means that we need to grow too, ensuring that we can meet the needs of even more people in the future. A life with deafblindness can be challenging, one with constant adaptation and learning, the mental load of doing this can be exhausting.

Our specialist teams help people to cope with the emotional and physical challenges of adapting to and living with deafblindness.

Over 450,000 people are affected by deafblindness in the UK, and this number is rising every day.

450,000

Thanks to your support, we help people living with deafblindness to:

- Access information when they need it, in a way that suits them
- Manage their mental health and get emotional support during difficult times
- Connect with others using the latest accessible technology
- Meet new people and have meaningful conversations
- Reap the benefits of a short break away from home
- Continue being as independent as they want, with the help of our team of support workers and communicator guides as well as our supported living accommodation
- Confidently access employment or education
- Increase their knowledge and skill set linked with deafblindness
- Participate in research and be informed of the latest outcomes of research
- Contribute to society in a constructive, creative and fulfilling way



“ Deafblind UK have given me the opportunity to make a difference to others while I’m on a journey back to health, so thank you. You’ve no idea how much it means.



02 Our purpose

13

This year we have supported **4,346** people with dual sensory loss and **188** unpaid carers.

We’ve also worked with 1,905 professionals to support them in their roles with deafblind people, and our Helpline team handled 9,312 calls. That means every 15 minutes we’ve helped someone in need.

Our amazing volunteers continue to enable us to achieve so much more, with 473 volunteers contributing during 2024–2025. Additional training and support opportunities for volunteers included access to a rolling programme of Deafblind Awareness sessions, introduction to BSL, introduction to Accessible Technology sessions, attendance at Deafblind UK conference, themed befriending sessions.

Our support

1,905

Professionals supported in their roles with deafblind people.



4,346

Members directly supported.



9,312

Helpline interventions made.



Our vision is to create a world where people living with deafblindness thrive, empowered by knowledge, support and equity.



Deafblindness is a condition that is affecting more and more people every year.

In order to support people of all ages with dual sensory loss to thrive, and not just survive, we are continuing to evolve and grow. We are constantly developing our understanding of deafblindness and helping others to understand its impact.

Our five areas of impact provide a basis on which we are developing and evolving.

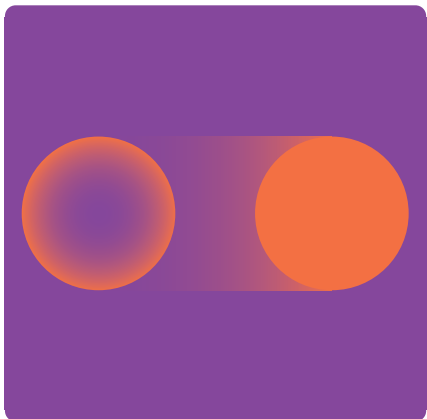


Our 5 areas of impact provide a basis on which we can develop and evolve. They are:

1

Improving our support

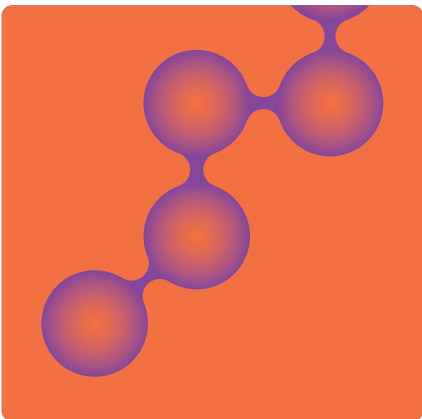
Providing support and information for people who are impacted by deafblindness and for professionals who work with people who are deafblind.



2

Educating others about deafblindness

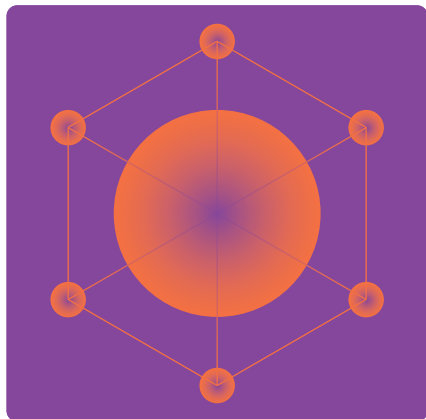
Educating others including those who are impacted by deafblindness and the wider local, national and international communities.



3

Our research

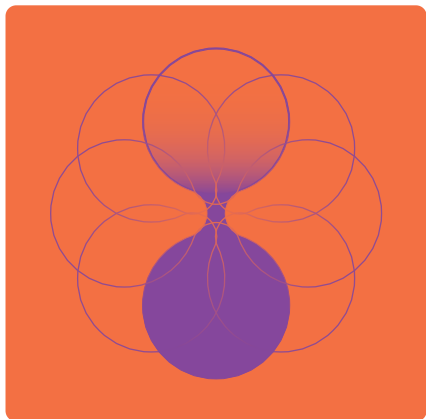
Researching deafblindness to better understand the condition and identify interventions that will improve the lives of those affected by deafblindness.



4

Remaining on the International agenda

Influencing decision makers for the benefit of those impacted by deafblindness and their communities.



5

Supporting the adoption of technology

Supporting development and use of technology for people who are deafblind and for those who work with people who are deafblind.





We work with 21 different ethnic groups, and those we support use a variety of languages to communicate including Deafblind Manual, British Sign Language, Block, Hands-On, Makaton and Objects of Reference.

Our supported living complex, Rainbow Court, provides safe and welcoming homes to people who are deafblind. Last year we funded a project turning a former office building on the site into two specially designed accessible bungalows. The new builds are now home to people who are deafblind with more complex needs.

Our webmap of accessible social opportunities now has 135 opportunities listed. 599 of our members currently attend at least one of these Deafblind Friendly opportunities.

We partner with organisations like the Macular Society, Age UK, Blind Asians, Re-engage and Andy's Men's Sheds to up-skill their leaders and make their venues Deafblind Friendly.

Our Advisory Group members are an invaluable resource from whom we gather feedback about services and products. It has also provided researchers with a willing group of participants to further our understanding of deafblindness and its impact.

599 

The number of members currently attending at least one of our Deafblind Friendly opportunities.

Area 1

Improving our support

We assess the impact of our service to ensure our support is as effective as possible. People who self-reported their well-being as 2.2 out of 5, improved to 4.8 out of 5 after our support.

“ Best course I’ve done in years. The session was really informative and I’ve learned a lot. Thank you so much!

Attendee
St. John Ambulance

1,671 

Resource packs have been placed in 1,671 schools in the UK.

Our award-winning schools project has continued to flourish, with key stage two and three resource packs in 1,671 schools. This is part of a wider provision of our ‘Children and Young People’ service which was launched in Spring 2025.

Our awareness talks deliver learning sessions to organisations who want a deeper understanding of deafblindness. A total of 299 service talks or events were delivered this year and demand continues to increase.

We partner with Birmingham City University, to deliver the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Studies [Deafblind Studies] in collaboration with Deafblind UK, Sense, Deafblind Scotland and Sense Scotland. The only university course of its kind in the UK.

We support employers to make the adjustments needed to welcome people who are deafblind to their workforce, and will extend this project in 2025–2026 in response to an increase in need.



Area 2

Educating others about deafblindness

To increase our reach to a greater audience it is vital that we help other people understand deafblindness and its impact.



Area 3

Our research

We are constantly developing our understanding of deafblindness so that we can provide the very best, specialised support to those affected and other key partners in the field.

“ This Centre will make an important contribution, both to greater understanding and public awareness to the ways in which social and technological innovation can assist in the future.

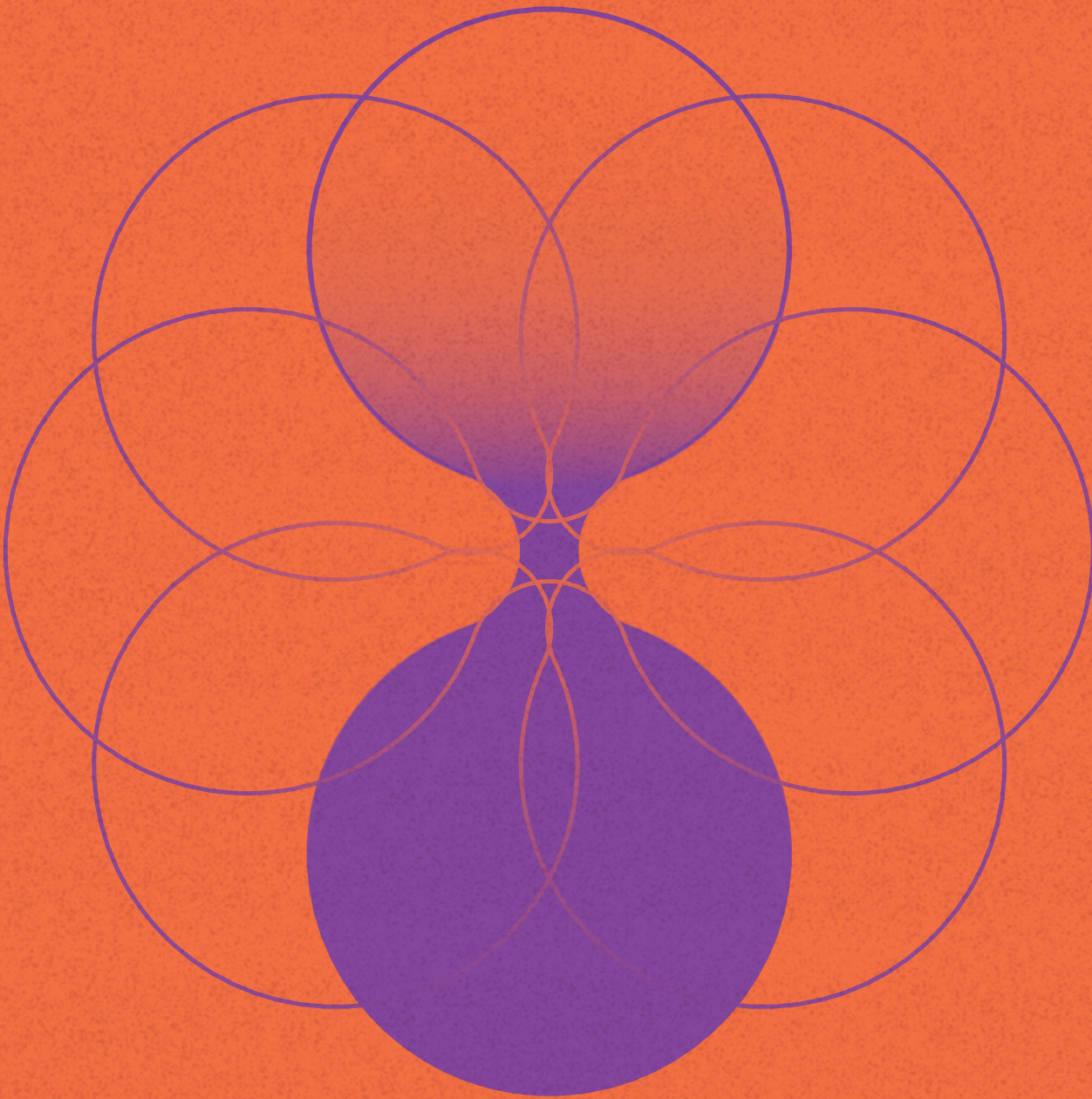
Lord Blunket
Member of the House of Lords

In 2025 we launched the Deafblind UK Education and Research Centre at Birmingham City University to better understand the impact of deafblindness and the best interventions to help.

The new Centre has been hailed as a game changer in the fight to address the “frustrating and overwhelming isolation” felt by many deafblind people.

The Centre is the first of its kind in the UK and will also equip junior researchers and the workforce with the knowledge and skills to become future leaders in deafblindness research and practice.

We continue to support two PhD students who are looking into accessible design and the prevalence of deafblindness amongst mainstream school pupils.



Area 4

Remaining on the international agenda

We continue to build solid relationships with key decision makers in government and partner organisations across the globe to ensure that everyone who is deafblind is appropriately supported.

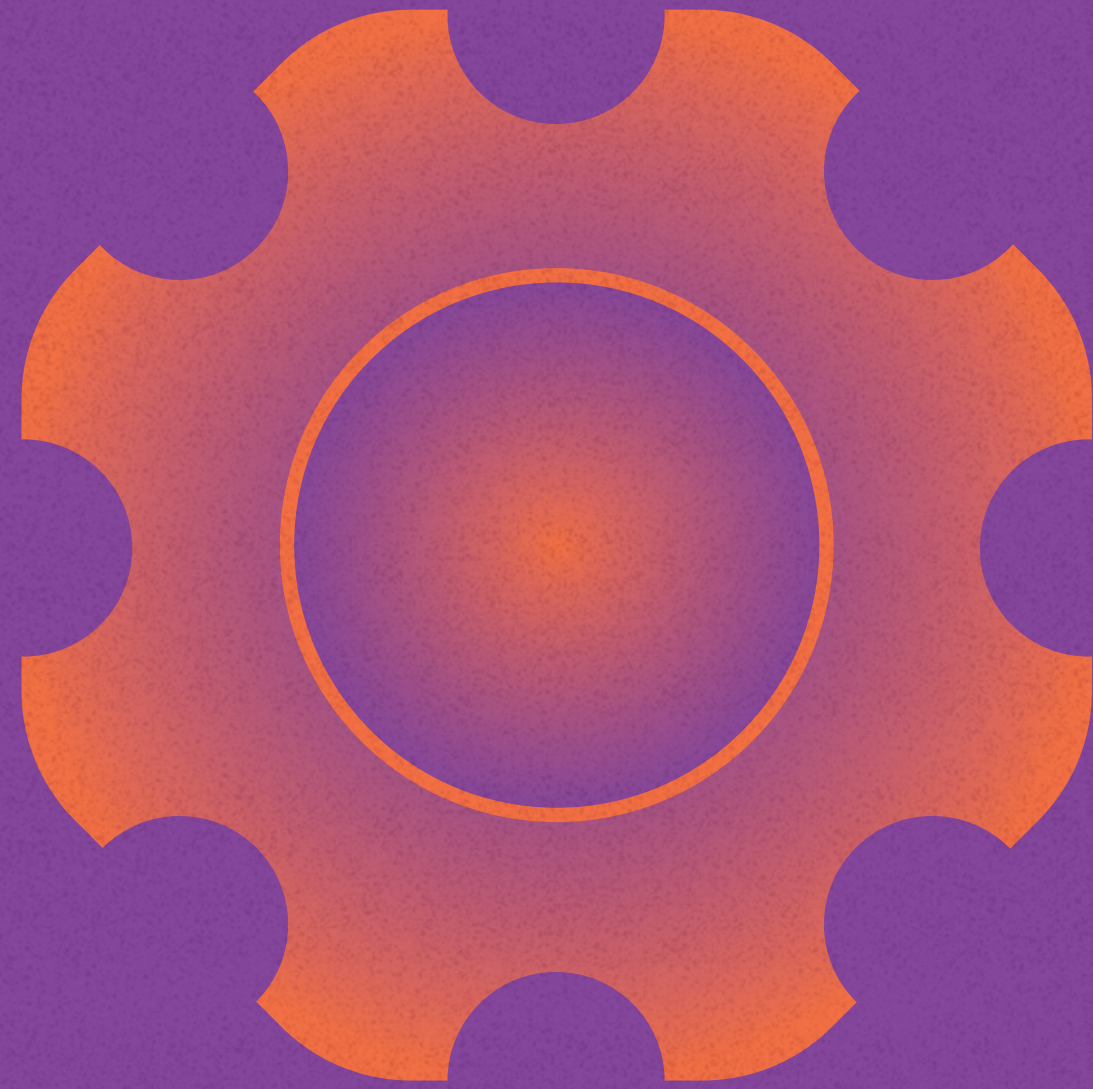


The Deafblind UK Conference took place in October, with over 1,200 people from across the world joining us to discuss the topic of **Standing Out and Fitting In**.

Our work with local and national decision makers including cabinet members, MP's, Councillors, Commissioners and All Parliamentary Party Groups ensures that the obligations outlined in The Care Act [2014] are recognised and carried out at every level. We welcomed providers and political influencers to Rainbow Court and team meetings to further their understanding of deafblindness and the role that Deafblind UK plays.

Once again, we worked with Usher Kids UK to support their Summer Camp for young people with Usher syndrome, which was attended by young people who had the chance to develop new friendships and work with mentors to develop new skills.





Area 5

Supporting the adoption of technology

Technology is crucial in helping people who are deafblind maintain independence and continue to do the things that are important to them. We support our members in both using and influencing how new technologies develop, ensuring accessibility is at the forefront.

1,233 deafblind members received 1:1 technology support this year, plus another 1,802 non-members [family, professionals and support staff].

We have started to develop a library of downloadable fact sheets accessible via our website with 20 now available and more planned.

We work closely with large and small technology developers and we are proud to be able to impact new cutting-edge developments and reassured to see consideration towards sensory loss become more commonplace. Our new technology advisory group and our wider Deafblind UK advisory group are instrumental in providing feedback to these developers.

We have also been continuing to work on the development of an app for Deafblind UK members. This is designed to give members quick access to support and information as well as to help them communicate their support needs to others.

1,233



1,233 deafblind members received 1:1 technology support.



We will continue to develop our service provision to meet the evolving needs of our members.



There will be a focus on developing our Employability Programme and our access to employment programme, where we will invest even further in staff development and expertise to ensure we can provide the best possible specialist advice and support.

This will be alongside the further development of the DBUK Education and Research Centre at Birmingham City University with the recruitment of PhD students undertaking discrete deafblind research.



We will also continue to plan for our Centenary Celebrations in 2028. This is an opportunity to look back, while using the Centenary as a springboard for a bigger, even better future. And we will continue to be steered and energised by our ongoing daily liaison with the people who really matter – deafblind people themselves.

We are excited to continue to develop our fundraising and retail income streams to provide greater financial sustainability.

This will include further recruitment to our fundraising team to increase our reach and expertise.

We will be opening an additional two shops to increase our retail income and further increase the benefits of economy of scale for this provision. This increase in activity will also provide opportunities to further engage with those people impacted by deafblindness and the communities they live within.



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