APPOINTMENT BRIEF

Head of Operations

An opportunity to lead exceptional services, empower colleagues and make a lasting difference to people living with deafblindness.

DeafblindUK



INTRODUCTION

A welcome to candidates.

Thank you for your interest in becoming Head of Operations at Deafblind UK.

This is an important moment in our history. As we approach our centenary in 2028, we are building on almost 100 years of specialist expertise while looking confidently towards a future in which we reach more people, strengthen our services and extend our national influence.

Our ambition is considerable. We want to create more opportunities for people living with deafblindness to enjoy independence, wellbeing, meaningful relationships and full participation in society. Achieving this will require us to keep developing our services, strengthen our operational effectiveness, and find new ways to respond to changing needs.

We are therefore seeking an accomplished and values-led operational leader who can help translate our ambitions into meaningful, sustainable change.

As Head of Operations, you will have responsibility for a diverse portfolio encompassing regulated care and support and charitable services. You will provide strategic direction and practical leadership, ensuring that our services are safe, effective, financially sustainable and shaped by the experiences and aspirations of the people we support.

We are looking for someone who combines sound professional judgement with empathy, ambition and the confidence to lead change. You will understand the importance of regulatory compliance and safeguarding but recognise that outstanding services are about much more than meeting standards. They are about enabling people to live the lives they choose.

This is an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to an organisation with a proud heritage, growing reach and a clear determination to achieve more.

Most importantly, you will help shape the services Deafblind UK provides as we enter our second century.



Nikki Morris BEM
CEO



Rod Cullen
Deputy CEO

ABOUT US

Almost 100 years of purpose and progress.

Our story began in 1928 with a pioneering belief that combined sight and hearing loss should not prevent someone from participating fully in life.

Almost a century later, that principle continues to define us. Deafblind UK is the only national charity specialising solely in supporting people who are deafblind. Over the decades, we have evolved considerably, adapting our services, expertise and approach to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of people living with dual sensory loss.

Today, we are much more than a provider of services. We are a community, a source of specialist expertise, an educator, a research partner and an increasingly influential national voice.

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

We pursue this through five interconnected areas: support and information, education, research, influencing decision-makers and technology.

Central to our approach is the conviction that people living with deafblindness must have a meaningful voice in shaping the services and decisions that affect their lives. Our Advisory Group brings lived experience directly into our work, informing service development, research, technology and organisational priorities.

We are proud of our heritage, but our focus is firmly on what comes next.





Deafblind UK | Head of Operations

SUPPORT & SERVICES

There at every stage of the journey.

Combined sight and hearing loss can affect almost every aspect of daily life, from communication and accessing information to employment, relationships, independence and social connection.

Our services recognise that everyone's experiences, circumstances and aspirations are different.

We provide specialist wellbeing support, communicator guides, befriending, accessible information, technology assistance, housing and supported living, alongside employment, education and support for unpaid carers.

Our residential and supported living services, Rainbow Court in Peterborough and The Lodge in West London, enable people with deafblindness, including those with complex needs, to access specialist accommodation and person-centred care.

Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, our community-based services provide practical assistance, emotional support and opportunities for greater independence.

We are also expanding our reach through information hubs, specialist helplines, partnerships and accessible technology.

Alongside direct support, our education and research activities strengthen professional understanding and practice. Our Centre for Education and Research at Birmingham City University supports the development of knowledge, evidence and innovation.

The Head of Operations will have a central role in bringing these activities together, strengthening consistency, quality and collaboration while identifying opportunities to extend our reach and impact.

IMPACT

Turning specialist support into lasting change.

We measure our success not simply by the number of people we support, but by the difference we make in their lives.

During 2025–26, Deafblind UK delivered more than 38,700 direct support interventions, supporting 4,346 people living with dual sensory loss across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our teams made 9,620 befriending calls and 8,864 wellbeing calls, providing reassurance, practical assistance and meaningful connection.

Our helpline answered a call approximately every 12 minutes, while 229 unpaid carers received support. The contribution of 374 volunteers extended our reach further.

Importantly, people accessing our support reported average wellbeing scores improving from 2.4 out of 5 to 4.6 out of 5.

Our influence extends beyond direct services. Almost 500 professionals received Deafblind UK training, while educational resources were available in more than 1,600 schools.

These achievements provide a strong foundation, but we recognise that much more remains to be done.

The challenge for our next Head of Operations will be to build on this progress, strengthen the quality and effectiveness of our services and ensure that our growing ambitions translate into measurable improvements in people's lives.





Head of Operations

Leadership, Excellence, Impact.

The appointment of our next Head of Operations represents an opportunity to influence both the quality of our existing services and the direction of their future development.

Reporting to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer and working closely with the Executive Management Team, you will provide leadership across Care and Support, Charitable Services and our education programme.

Your responsibilities will encompass CQC-regulated services, community-based support, safeguarding, service quality, workforce leadership, operational performance and financial sustainability.

You will lead change where it is needed, strengthen accountability and help create an environment in which colleagues feel supported, empowered and confident to deliver outstanding services.

An important part of your contribution will be identifying opportunities for innovation and growth, developing new partnerships and ensuring that our services evolve in response to changing needs.

You will also work closely with colleagues responsible for fundraising, finance, research and education, recognising that effective operational leadership depends on collaboration across the organisation.

We are seeking someone who can balance strategic ambition with practical delivery, who is comfortable navigating complexity and who understands that sustainable change depends on bringing people with you.

Above all, you will be motivated by the opportunity to improve the lives of people living with deafblindness.

Responsibilities

Shaping Deafblind UK's second century.

Strategic & Operational Leadership

- You will translate organisational priorities into clear operational plans, ensuring that services work collaboratively, deliver measurable outcomes and make effective use of available resources.
- You will oversee performance, identify emerging risks and opportunities, and provide the Executive Management Team with informed advice on operational priorities, service improvement and future development.

Care & Support

- You will provide strategic leadership and oversight of our regulated residential and community-based care and support services.
- Working with the Registered Manager and operational teams, you will ensure that services are safe, person-centred, responsive and compliant with relevant regulatory requirements.
- You will lead service improvement and change, strengthen management accountability and support the development of new models of care and independent living.

Charitable Services

- You will lead the effective delivery and development of our wider charitable services, including information, advice, wellbeing, rehabilitation, employment and community engagement.
- You will ensure that programmes are accessible, appropriately resourced and evaluated against clear outcomes, with lived experience and feedback informing future development.

Education & Research

- You will oversee the operational and commercial performance of Deafblind UK's education programme, ensuring that training and learning activities are high-quality, financially sustainable and aligned with organisational priorities.
- Working alongside the Head of Education and Research, you will support opportunities to expand the programme's reach, strengthen partnerships and contribute to relevant research initiatives.

Safeguarding, Quality & Governance

- You will provide organisational leadership on safeguarding, ensuring that effective systems, policies and practices protect the people who use our services.
- Subject to the necessary regulatory requirements, you will act as the Nominated Individual for our CQC-regulated provision.
- You will oversee quality assurance, regulatory compliance, incident management and operational risk, promoting a culture of openness, learning and continuous improvement.

Service Development & Growth

- You will identify opportunities to strengthen and expand our residential, community and charitable services, developing robust business cases and working with colleagues and partners to assess feasibility, impact and financial sustainability.
- You will help develop relationships with commissioners, statutory agencies, health and social care organisations and other partners to support future provision.

Financial & Resource Management

- You will oversee the effective management of operational budgets, resources and performance, working with finance colleagues and service managers to ensure sound financial planning and accountability.
- You will balance efficiency and sustainability with our commitment to quality, safety and person-centred support.

People Leadership

- You will lead, support and develop managers and colleagues across your areas of responsibility, creating a positive, inclusive and accountable working culture.
- You will encourage professional development, effective communication, collaboration and staff wellbeing, recognising that our people are central to the quality of our services.

Person Specification

Expertise, judgement, curiosty and values.

We are seeking an experienced operational leader who brings the professional expertise, personal qualities and commitment necessary to help Deafblind UK realise its ambitions.

You may have developed your career within health and social care, disability services, the charitable sector or another relevant environment.

What matters is your ability to combine effective operational management with strategic thinking, strong leadership and a genuine commitment to improving people's lives.

Experience & Capabilities

- Significant experience of leading complex services or operational functions, ideally across multiple teams, locations or service areas.
- Experience of regulated care environments and a sound understanding of CQC requirements.
- A strong understanding of safeguarding, quality assurance, risk management and organisational accountability.
- A successful record of leading service improvement, organisational change or operational transformation.
- Experience of managing and developing managers and multidisciplinary teams.
- Sound financial management skills, including budgeting, resource allocation and performance monitoring.
- The ability to translate strategic priorities into achievable plans and measurable outcomes.
- Experience of building productive relationships with external partners and stakeholders.
- Strong communication, analytical and decision-making skills.
- A commitment to person-centred practice, accessibility, inclusion and the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience.

We would particularly welcome experience of residential and community-based services, supported housing, charitable programme delivery, education or training, commissioning arrangements and the development of new services or partnerships.

Knowledge of sensory loss, deafblindness or specialist disability provision would be advantageous, although an understanding of the sector can be developed.

Personal Approach

We are particularly interested in candidates who combine ambition with humility and confidence with a willingness to listen.

- You will be comfortable taking responsibility and making difficult decisions, but recognise that effective leadership depends on the knowledge, experience and commitment of others.
- You will bring sound judgement, resilience and the ability to manage competing priorities without losing sight of the people our services exist to support.
- You will communicate openly, build trust and create an environment in which colleagues feel valued, supported and accountable.
- You will be curious, adaptable and willing to challenge established practices where better approaches can be developed.

Above all, you will share our belief that people living with deafblindness should have the support, opportunities and independence to live fulfilling lives.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Deafblind UK is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in everything we do. We welcome applications from suitably qualified candidates of all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from people who are underrepresented in senior leadership. We also recognise the value of different perspectives, experiences and approaches, including the contribution of people with lived experience of disability and sensory loss.



HOW TO APPLY

We would be delighted to hear from you.

If you are interested in helping shape the next chapter of Deafblind UK's development, we would welcome your application and encourage you to please forward:

- A CV or an extended biography outlining your executive and non-executive appointments, achievements, and academic and professional qualifications.
- A supporting statement (maximum 2 x A4 pages) demonstrating your motivation, skills, and experience relevant to the role, how you would hope to add value to the charity and any other relevant information.

Please email your application to our advising consultant, Philip Nelson, at philip.nelson@thehiringdept.com.

We would also be grateful if you could let us know if you need any special provisions should you be called forward for an interview.

The appointment will be subject to satisfactory references and a DBS check.

Timetable

Closing Date: Monday 9th November
Final Panel Interviews: to be confirmed

Queries

For an informal and confidential discussion, to ask a question about any aspect of the appointment process, or for additional information, please contact our advising consultant, Philip Nelson, on 020 3590 9978 or by email at philip.nelson@thehiringdept.com.



Help shape our next 100 years

Deafblind UK | Head of Operations | 2026

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