

dsn

Deaf & Sensory Network

2025-26

STRATEGY REPORT



Executive Summary

DAVE FARDOE | CHAIRMAN



When an organisation has as long and rich a history as DSN, developing a new strategy can seem both daunting and perhaps superfluous, yet one thing is true above all other: change is constant. Our needs evolve as we age, technologies develop, and new ideas and innovations are brought to bear. To remain current, we too must develop our thinking.

At the core of any strategy must be the values we hold dear and, with reference to the 48 years plus of history and service, the values we seek to build upon are apparent.

- Inclusive** - we make no distinctions and serve all our client groups and stakeholders equally.
- Compassionate** - we take time to understand need, all points of view and we act with care and grace to deliver what is required.
- Consistent** - the services we provide are equal across our locations, and the geographical areas we deliver in. This delivery is the same irrespective of personal circumstances, the only change you will see in our services are improvements.
- Commitment** - the fourth pillar of our strategy is in making and keeping this running and delivering for you.

We pride ourselves in our ability to work with **Our Partners**, delivering to **Our Community**, investing in and developing **Our People**.

We recognise the contributions of individuals as well as teams, each contribution helping to maintain **Our Stability**, which we have developed over 48 years, as we continue to evolve and innovate in what is a dynamic and changing world. These are the foundations upon which we have built **DSN** and from which we will continue to grow.

We are excited for the future; new technologies, new knowledge, new techniques and long-awaited recognition. We are well placed to take advantage of and to leverage these changes bringing new services and outreach capability in ways we have not been able to before.



What we do

DSN supports people who are deaf or deafblind in Cheshire, North East Wales and the surrounding areas. Established in 1976 our mission is to create a world where people with a sensory loss can communicate effectively and live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives. We deliver our support through various services.

Central Services

Our front of house team is the first port of call for enquiries and provides information and signposting for service users. Central management, including finance and HR, support our people to deliver frontline services to our communities.

Social Care

Our experienced sensory support team assists people in Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Flintshire and Wrexham with information & advice, specialist assessments, technical equipment to support with daily living and referrals to partner agencies. Support is provided through drop in, face to face and online sessions.

Supported Living

Our supported living group homes provide support and care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A total communication approach is adopted and all staff are British Sign Language (BSL) users, enabling us to create an environment of inclusion which enriches the lives of our service users.

Training

incus is our bespoke training service and offers a range of courses to suit all needs. These include Deaf Awareness Training, BSL courses from Levels 1- 6+ and sensory loss & dementia training. These are offered in person and on-line and are available to everyone. We also provide courses for businesses and schools.

Youth Services

DSN is an active supporter of youth activities and we aim to make a real difference to the social lives and development of young people within our community. We offer inclusive activity groups for children and young people.

Communication Services

DSN provides qualified BSL interpreters for all requirements including medical and legal appointments, meetings, corporate events, and general support.

Projects

We operate funded projects to support people with a sensory loss across our geographical area. These have included projects for veterans groups, older people, families with a deaf child and tinnitus outreach initiatives. These aim to improve communication and reduce social isolation for individuals, families and groups.

Day Services

We offer a range of developmental activities including fitness, crafts and cooking at our dedicated centre in Northwich. Our person-centred approach enables clients to enhance their life skills and realise their ambitions with the support of the dedicated staff team.

Our aims

Develop strong service partnerships that promote equality and inclusivity

Promote and influence the quality and accessibility of information

- Enable and promote appropriate communication and technological support
- Contribute to the promotion and protection of BSL in partnership with national networks
- Work with our partners in fulfilling their duties to provide equitable services
- Stay alert to developments in new technology and work with partners to achieve improved accessibility
- Use technology as a conduit to access a range of specialist services through our online platform and media outlets

Work with local community groups, commissioners, and funders to secure the provision of equitable specialist services

- Secure funding to deliver current and new specialist services
- Partner with others in related fields and influence key decision-makers
- Encourage research-led initiatives to ensure that current thinking is embedded in our services
- Facilitate and enable co-production opportunities



Promote positive social and emotional wellbeing

Maintain our focus on reducing the impact of social isolation and loneliness

- Design and implement well-being initiatives for all
- Maintain our youth offer
- Increase social interaction through innovative and effective services

Maintain the provision of early intervention and prevention services to ensure the best possible outcomes

- Work with stakeholders to promote equity and inclusivity for our communities
- Secure and maintain Local Authority contracts to provide specialist services
- Deliver community outreach programmes so that socially isolated members of the community can access our specialist services
- Continue to provide person-centred support via an all-age offer



Maximise our impact by investing in our people

Encourage mutual accountability with our stakeholders

- Further develop an integrated framework of good governance to ensure effective oversight of **DSN**
- Maintain our ethical model and values, guiding how we work with funders, suppliers, partners, communities, and staff
- Work with the Board of Trustees to ensure appropriate governance as required by the Charities Commission and Companies House and other regulatory bodies

Promote a culture where everyone feels valued

- Embed a positive organisational and management culture where people are well-led, feel engaged, supported and are equipped to perform their best as ambassadors of **DSN**, recognising that we are experts by experience
- Invest in a targeted development and training programme to ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to meet the challenges ahead
- Create new and modern working environments which meet the needs of our staff and clients
- Have an organisational approach to ensure best practice standards, including health & safety, security, and safeguarding
- Build on the use of technologies to help deliver more efficient business processes and effective ways of working for staff
- Develop robust succession planning to ensure the long-term viability of **DSN**
Develop and implement a people strategy

Build a robust and financially sustainable organisation

Diversify our income streams to ensure a sustainable future

- Implement a management process for funding opportunities that identifies business needs, risks, costs, and benefits
- Continually review all services to ensure that they are appropriately funded
- Identify need and invest in the expansion of our services where appropriate

Monitor all services regularly to ensure efficiencies are implemented

- Maintain financial management systems to support effective and value-added decisions
- Continue to implement internal organisational audits to ensure optimum operational efficiency

Maximise the value of our investment portfolio

- Review the reserves policy to ensure financial security against future unknown factors
- Develop investment strategies to optimise working capital



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