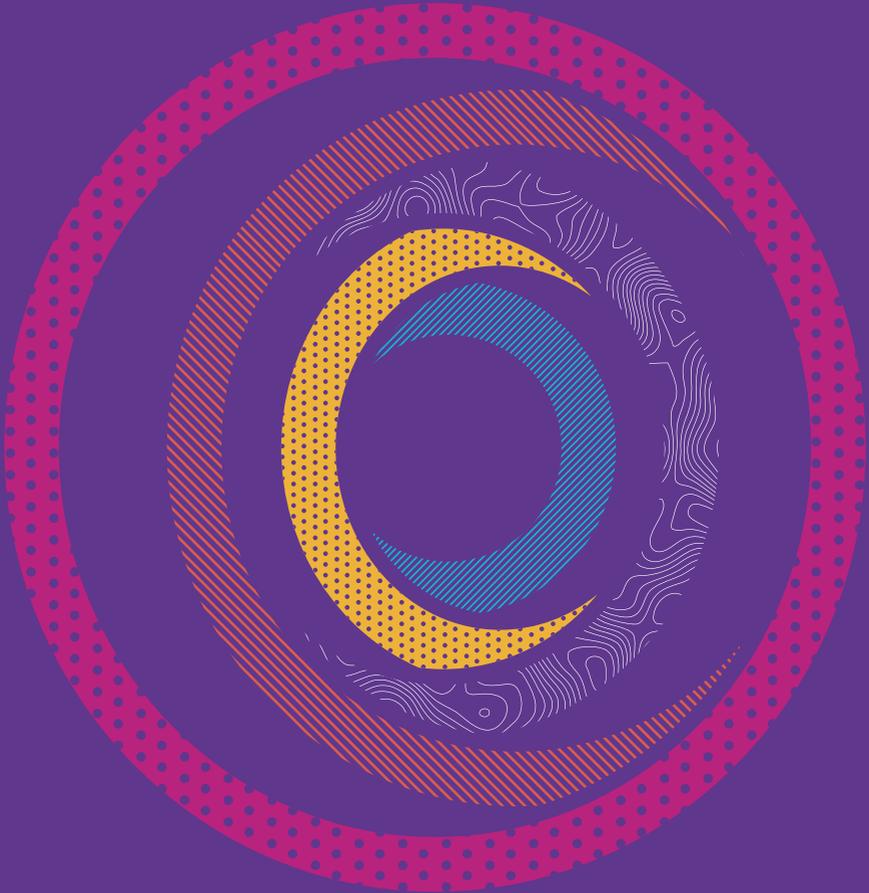


Being seen and heard

The difference we made in 2017/18





deafscotland works to

bring real change

to the lives of deaf people

Our purpose

Over one million people across Scotland are on the deafness spectrum. They face daily barriers, from increased experience of homelessness to greater likelihood of mental illness and underemployment.

As the lead organisation for deaf issues in Scotland, we unify those passionate about providing support to those who experience deafness. They represent the marginalised and voiceless.

We represent all four 'key pillars' of deafness:

- Deaf/British Sign Language (BSL) users
- Deafened
- Deafblind
- Hard of hearing

Each pillar requires different levels of support, but they are unified around our vision for Scotland – a society where all people have equal access, rights, and citizenship.

As a national umbrella and membership body, we inspire and motivate inclusion, promote awareness of deaf issues, and shift attitudes across society. We also undertake lobbying activities on local and national levels, listening to our members' concerns and championing on their behalf.

Beyond 90 years

The Scottish Council on Deafness celebrated its 90th birthday in 2017. This milestone sparked conversation about our place and function in Scotland. Society looks very different now to what it did 90 years ago: it was time that we caught up. We needed a refreshed look to stay relevant to our members - and so deafscotland was born.

“The year 2017/18 has been as busy as ever. We started the financial year as ‘SCoD’, underwent a review, and ended the year as ‘deafscotland’. This rebranding celebrates 90 years of service, recognises successes, and sets us up for new the challenges ahead.”

Janis McDonald, Chief Officer

One of the many changes seen since the organisation’s incorporation in 1927 includes how the community refers to the spectrum of deafness. For this reason, a lower case “d” in deafscotland has been used to represent the broad range of deafness that people in Scotland experience - hard of hearing to having no hearing and deafblindness. deafscotland’s members support people across the whole spectrum.

Additionally, broader society has gone through a digital technology revolution. These technologies give deaf people greater opportunities to interact and communicate than ever before. By incorporating them into deafscotland, members will experience greater access to information.

We are moving into this new phase with confidence and excitement. With a revamped brand and image, we are positioned to gain a greater understanding of deaf people’s issues and concerns across Scotland. We will continue to champion for our members and achieve our aim of equal access, rights and citizenship.

“As we move forward the emphasis will be on evidence and outcomes, continued and improved engagement with members and build on learning and networks to achieve the ambition: access, inclusion and integration of deaf people across Scottish society.”

Donald Richards, Convenor



“We share the Scottish Government’s ambition to make Scotland the best place in the world for British Sign Language users to live, work, visit and learn.”

Janis McDonald, Chief Officer

Meet the members

Glasgow City Council



How they benefit

Advice and guidance on how local authority services are made available to all

Long term member, Glasgow City Council (GCC) works with us to get advice and guidance on how local authority services are made available to all.

Council services, including the Autism Resource Centre and Sign Language Interpreting Service, were impacted by the introduction of the British Sign Language Act. Understanding how GCC needed to restructure those services to be compliant with the new legislation was essential.

We provided guidance through workshops and meetings with GCC and its staff. Crucially, this guidance has ensured that GCC’s services are inclusive of a wider section of society. GCC staff also have a greater understanding of the unique barriers deaf people experience.

Deaf Links



How they benefit

Valuable sector information and networking opportunities

Deaf Links is a local membership network committed to bringing people who have a hearing and/or a sight loss in Tayside together. As a member of deafscotland since 2009, Deaf Links values our commitment to connecting the sector across Scotland.

One of the key benefits to Deaf Links is the information shared regularly through the news bulletins. Deaf Links' members have the advantage of learning from the information and developments from the Scottish deaf sector that are relevant to them.

This connection to a national network has had a positive impact on those involved with Deaf Links. It has improved awareness of the challenges that deaf people face and helped source solutions to those barriers. It is a national link for local deaf people who would otherwise feel isolated from other deaf people and organisations across Scotland.

“deafscotland is well placed to

be the voice for deafness in

Scotland. It has a real influence

in campaigning and pushing

for change around deaf rights

and access. It is the voice for

those who have been forgotten

or overlooked.”

Alana, CEO, Deaf Links

Training courses were a new offering for members in 2017/18 and were well attended

The twice-monthly bulletin contains vital information about our lobbying activities, as well as information about our members' developments. We are pleased to see that readers continue to utilise the various accessible formats the bulletin is delivered in.

As part of the 90 years celebrations, a Fun Day was held in June 2017 in Paisley. The event was held in collaboration with West Scotland Deaf Children's Society who were celebrating their own milestone of 70 years in service to the community! The day included sports, raffles, bouncy castles, and a disco, all rounded off with a great barbecue for attendees.

**“We are pleased to see that readers
continue to utilise the various
accessible formats the bulletin is
delivered in”**

Janis McDonald, Chief Officer



Beyond the membership

By creating a united voice, we champion for our members at both local and national government levels. We work closely with councils and public services, ensuring members' issues and challenges are communicated to key decision makers.

In 2017/18 several ongoing lobbying activities progressed, including those impacting on:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Legislation

Difference made

Critical information must be communicated in an accessible and inclusive format

Omitting the needs of all citizens in legislation is a wall to equality. **53% of people in Scotland living with a disability are not in employment**, so accessing social security can be the difference between putting food on the table or going hungry. Access had been limited for people who are deaf by the Social Security (Scotland) Bill, stating communication should be by phone or in person. Lobbying resulted in the government inserting **a clause requiring information to be provided in a way that is useful to all people, ensuring equal access to all citizens.**

Difference made

BSL to be incorporated into everyday school life

The education system has many barriers for young people and children experiencing deafness. Following our lobbying efforts to the Scottish government, **a plan to further incorporate BSL into everyday school life was announced in October 2017.** A step in the right direction, the plan intends to address 'equal access' to pupils in schools.

Difference made

Mental health support available via BSL

Services offered by the National Health Service have been an ongoing concern. Mental illness is experienced by around 40% of deaf people, so access to mental health services is crucial. Many remote services are available by phone: a significant barrier that can be incredibly frustrating - and potentially dangerous.

A major success was with Breathing Space: a free, confidential service for when a person feels overwhelmed and unable to cope with everyday life. Offered by the NHS, this service was only available over the phone. **Breathing Space now offers an online BSL interpretation service thanks to deafscotland's lobbying efforts.**

How they benefit

Cross-sector collaboration on equal access to services

We are a key advisor on ScotRail's stakeholder equality group, providing free advice to ScotRail concerning accessible travel information for deaf people. Although ScotRail is not a member, our relationship with them is essential in ensuring equal access to services for people across all pillars of deafness.

The link to deaf people has been vital to ScotRail's decision making for alterations to stations, trains, and general services. We inform and advise ScotRail on how its service can be optimised for those travelling with extra needs. ScotRail now has a better understanding of how its decisions impact all service users.

“deafscotland plays a big role in helping ScotRail make informed decisions. The organisation's involvement with ScotRail's recent introduction of services on the Edinburgh - Glasgow and inter-city lines has been essential. They helped with the physical design of the services to make them more accessible to their members.”

Andrew, Access and Inclusion Manager, ScotRail



“deafscotland plays a big role in helping ScotRail make informed decisions. The organisation's involvement has been essential.”

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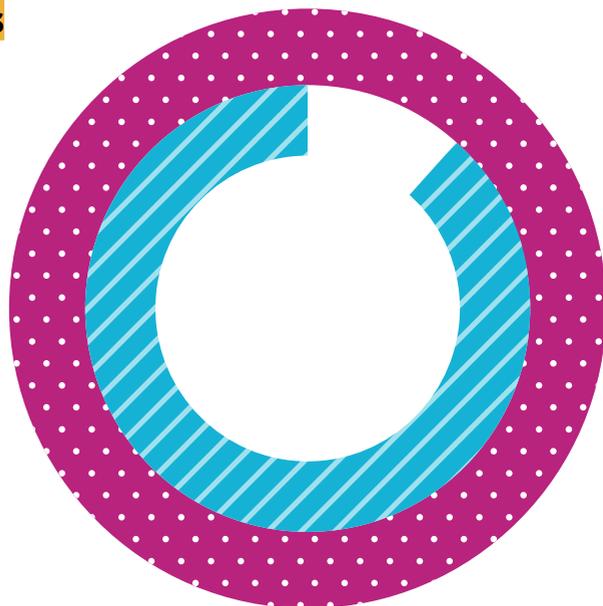
What you need to know about the numbers

From the numbers, it appears that we ended the year with a healthy £45,027 surplus.

However, these surplus funds cannot be used to fund our core activities next year.

Funding from grants are either restricted or unrestricted. Unrestricted funds can be used for any purpose we sees fit, but restricted funds must be used for a specific purpose or project.

Total funds



Restricted funds

Must be used for a specific purpose or project

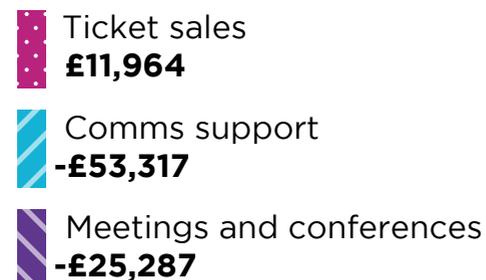


Unrestricted funds

Can be used for any purpose



Conference and events



Challenge

Limited unrestricted funding

Unrestricted core funding was raised through government grants, membership fees, donations, conference ticket sales, and some earned income.

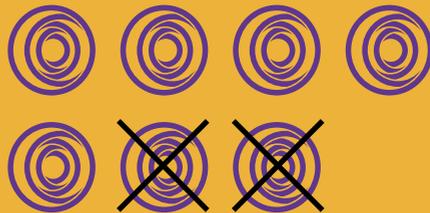
However, this was not enough to cover all core expenses. We did not have enough funding for our valuable core activities, such as networking events and communication support.

Challenge

Dropping government funding

A major concern in 2017/18 has been the erosion of unrestricted grants. Our core funding from the government for example was dropped to just £35,000. Because of the difficulty in securing funding for core costs, we had to cut back from seven employees to just five this year.

2 people lost
their jobs
at deafscotland
because of a lack of
government funding



Challenge

Events running at a loss

Other unrestricted income was raised through ticket sales to the annual conference. However, the additional support our members need for these events, such as communication support, come at a greater cost. The money needed was taken from unrestricted core funding.

Challenge

Restricted funding cannot cover core costs

Not all restricted funding was used this year but can only be brought forward to finish delivery of specific projects.

Overcoming barriers

The Enterprising Approach

We have recognised the need to shift our strategic approach to diversify income streams and continue to add value to members. An 'Enterprising Approach' is to be implemented in the next financial year to reduce our dependency on grants through new income streams, including establishing strategic alliances with other organisations. Through this approach, we will secure financial sustainability.

Improvements based on feedback

Our membership offering is currently under review to ensure its value at all membership levels. This review will take into consideration the following concerns and suggestions from feedback and comments from our members.

Communicate

More health and education workshops were suggested for the next annual conference. As these are critical topics in the community, we hope to provide further opportunities to explore valuable solutions to the barriers faced when accessing health and education.

Training sessions were a new offering in 2017/18. How they are packaged is currently under review. Suggestions for the training programmes include developing a deaf awareness basic training programme and to ensure greater clarity around training assessments, structure, and related costs.

Connect

Members have made it clear that they would like more opportunities to meet and connect. They have seen the value of connecting at events we have held in the past. More formal and informal networking opportunities are under consideration for the updated calendar.

“I would like to see more information get-togethers and networking socials for deafscotland members.”

deafscotland Member

Connecting with the sector to provide relevant information is a large part of our offering. Social media has been a recent introduction to how we connect with our members. This has been a step to introduce less traditional forms of networks to the wider deaf sector. There have been some teething problems that are currently being addressed to make sure this is effective for both staff and members. In the future, we hope to use social media as a platform to encourage members to connect outside of our formal events.

Other connection suggestions from members included creating a membership database of information and contact details accessible to all members.

Collaborate

Members suggested several opportunities for us to collaborate further with our community. These include introducing:

- Packages for advice and evaluations to members
- A base for members to hot desk or book rooms
- More BSL and deaf awareness audits

These recommendations would add significantly to our membership offering, as well as contributing to the 'Enterprising Approach' we will be implementing from next year.

“There has never been a more important time than now for the deaf community. deafscotland is a small band of very hard-working individuals going way beyond the call of duty in very austere times. I think these are the toughest times I can recall in 40 years of working in the sector.”

deafscotland Member



What's next?

We continue to be Scotland's unifying organisation for those working with or experiencing deafness.

The recent brand update reflects our commitment to being proactive rather than reactive as barriers arise. In doing so, the reality of a society where deaf people experience equal access, rights and citizenship is achievable.

We have an ongoing commitment to give deaf people in Scotland a voice.

Areas impacting our members that we will work on include:

- Mental health challenges and access to talking therapies
- NHS 24 access
- Preventing social isolation
- Safety - domestic violence, internet safety, third party reporting and hate crime - by ensuring better information and access
- Elderly care and increasing knowledge and understanding about the unique elements of care our deaf elderly require

If you are interested in learning more about our activities, events and network, visit our website deafscotland.org.uk

We'd love to connect with you and hear your stories about how you experience deafness.

The more the community understands the barriers we face, the easier it is to find proactive solutions.

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This report can be made available

on request in the following formats



BSL



Plain text

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