APPOINTMENT BRIEF

Trustee Recruitment Campaign 2026

Appointment of three new Trustees

Senior Legal Practice | CQC-Regulated Services & Housing Provision | Income Generation

DeafblindUK



INTRODUCTION

A welcome to candidates.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of Deafblind UK, the only national charity specialising solely in supporting people who are deafblind.

You will be joining us at a particularly exciting time in our history. As we approach our centenary in 2028, we are building on almost 100 years of experience and looking confidently towards the future. Demand for specialist deafblind services continues to grow, and so does our ambition: to reach more people, strengthen the support we provide, and increase our influence nationally and internationally.

Year on year, we have delivered more direct support interventions, strengthened our wellbeing services, launched a national helpline and expanded access to assistive technology and employability support. We have also continued developing the Deafblind UK Centre for Education and Research at Birmingham City University and held our inaugural parliamentary roundtable events.

This next chapter will require strong governance, fresh thinking and different perspectives around our Board table.

We are seeking new trustees who share our commitment to creating a world in which people living with deafblindness can thrive. We want to strengthen the Board with senior expertise in legal affairs, CQC-regulated services and housing provision, and income generation, while ensuring lived experience continues to inform decision-making at the highest level.

We would also welcome greater representation from Wales and Northern Ireland.

Being a trustee is an opportunity to contribute far more than professional expertise. We want people prepared to ask thoughtful questions, provide constructive challenge, support our leadership team and help us make ambitious but responsible decisions about the future.

Whether you are an experienced trustee or considering trusteeship for the first time, what matters is the contribution you can make, the perspective you bring and your commitment to our purpose.

You will join an organisation with a proud heritage, growing reach, and a clear ambition for the future. Most importantly, you will have an opportunity to help shape what Deafblind UK becomes as we enter our second century.



Robert Nolan OBE
Chairperson



Nikki Morris
CEO

ABOUT US

Almost 100 years of purpose and progress.

Our story began in 1928 with a pioneering belief: combined sight and hearing loss should not prevent someone from fully participating in life. Almost a century later, that principle still defines us.

Over the decades, Deafblind UK has evolved considerably, with innovation and independence continuing to shape who we are and how we work. From pioneering accessible communication to developing independent living provision, we have continually adapted our work to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of people living with deafblindness.

Today, we are much more than a service provider. We are a community, a source of specialist expertise, an educator, a research partner and an increasingly influential national voice for people affected by dual sensory loss.

Lived experience informs our work. Our Advisory Group of people living with deafblindness provides feedback on services and products and helps develop areas of focus, including research and technology.

We envision a world where people living with deafblindness thrive, empowered by knowledge, support, and equity, delivered through five interconnected areas of work: support and information; education; research; influencing decision-makers; and technology.

Proud of how far we have come, we are firmly focused on what comes next.





SUPPORT & SERVICES

There at every stage of the journey.

We support people affected by deafblindness at every stage of their journey.

Combined sight and hearing loss can affect almost every aspect of life, from communication and access to information to employment, relationships and independent living. Our person-centred approach recognises that everyone's needs and aspirations are different.

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

Combating isolation is central to our work. Befriending and social opportunities help people maintain relationships and community connections, while technology promotes independence and digital inclusion.

Rainbow Court in Peterborough provides specialist accommodation for deafblind people, including those with complex needs. We continue to develop supported living opportunities and invest in person-centred care nationwide.

Our UK-wide reach is expanding through information hubs in Northern Ireland and our plans to establish 100 dual sensory loss hubs in libraries across Wales. In partnership with Deafblind Scotland, we have also launched the National Usher Syndrome Helpline, providing advice and support.

Beyond direct services, we educate professionals, support research and influence decision-makers. The work of our Centre for Education and Research at Birmingham City University is advancing both ours and the wider global community's understanding of deafblindness and contributing to the development of innovative support solutions worldwide.

IMPACT

Turning specialist support into lasting change.

We measure our impact not simply by the number of people we reach, but by the difference we make in their lives: greater independence, improved wellbeing, reduced isolation, and more opportunities to participate fully in society.

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 dedication of 374 volunteers further extended our reach.

Crucially, we can demonstrate the difference our services make. People accessing our support reported average wellbeing scores improving from 2.4 out of 5 to 4.6 out of 5, demonstrating the transformative value of specialist, personalised support.

Our influence extends beyond direct services. Almost 500 professionals received Deafblind UK training last year, while educational resources were available in more than 1,600 schools, improving understanding and promoting inclusion.

Our growing national influence is reflected in our parliamentary roundtables and through the work of our Centre for Education and Research at Birmingham City University, which is strengthening the evidence base, informing professional practice and influencing public policy.





FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Resilient today. Investing for tomorrow.

Financially resilient, while continuing to invest deliberately in growth.

Deafblind UK has grown significantly over the past five years, evolving from a predominantly service-focused charity into a broader, increasingly ambitious national organisation. Today, our work combines specialist support with housing, research, education, technology, influencing decision-makers, and income generation.

That growth has been deliberate. We have expanded the breadth and reach of our services, invested in our people and infrastructure, developed new partnerships, strengthened our fundraising capability and begun building new sources of sustainable income. Most recently, we have expanded our retail operation as part of a five-year growth strategy and increased investment in fundraising and corporate partnerships.

Our financial trajectory reflects these developments. In 2025–26, group income increased by 6.7%, from £3.61 million to £3.85 million, while income from charitable activities rose by almost 15% from £1.52 million to £1.74 million. Growth was supported by increased grant funding, contracted services and our fundraising and partnership activity.

We have also been prepared to invest ahead of further growth. Expenditure increased to £4.11 million during 2025–26, reflecting planned investment in the workforce, implementation of the Real Living Wage and continued development of the retail operation.

Our ambitious plans are underpinned by a strong balance sheet and financial projections that indicate the charity is on track to double in size over the next four years.

FUTURE AMBITIONS

Shaping Deafblind UK's second century.

Our centenary in 2028 will be an important milestone, but our ambitions extend well beyond an anniversary.

We intend to expand and evolve our services, creating more opportunities for social connection, emotional wellbeing, accessible information and early intervention. We will strengthen peer support, improve access in underserved communities and regions, expand independent living provision and deepen our engagement with governments and decision-makers.

Education and research will play an increasingly significant role. We will develop partnerships with researchers, professionals and policymakers, both nationally and internationally.

Technology and digital inclusion will also be priorities. We will expand digital skills training, improve the accessibility of our online resources and collaborate with technology providers to ensure that emerging innovations create opportunities, rather than new barriers.

Ambition also requires sustainable income. We have strengthened our income-generation capacity through the appointment of a new Director of Income Generation, expanded fundraising and corporate partnerships, and opened additional retail shops to increase both income and community engagement. Continued investment in our people, volunteers, infrastructure and systems will underpin our growth.





APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES

Three appointments. Three areas of strategic importance.

This is a defining moment to join the Board of Deafblind UK as we approach our centenary. We seek trustees who will build on our remarkable legacy while bringing the vision, ambition and strategic leadership to shape our future.

Chaired by Robert Nolan, who is deafblind, our Board includes 50% of trustees with lived experience, ensuring their voices remain central to our decisions.

Together, we can strengthen our impact, extend our reach and enable more people affected by deafblindness to live with independence, dignity and choice.

We are seeking three new trustees with:

Senior legal expertise, ideally from an experienced solicitor or barrister, to strengthen the Board's ability to navigate an increasingly complex governance and regulatory environment. As the charity grows, develops partnerships, and expands its activities, sound legal judgement on governance, contracts, risk, property, and regulatory responsibilities will become increasingly valuable.

CQC-regulated services and housing provision expertise will be particularly important as we develop our ambitions for independent and supported living. The Board has designated £2.1 million towards developing supported living provision. We are looking for someone who understands both the strategic development of housing and the governance, quality, safeguarding and regulatory responsibilities involved in delivering high-quality care and support.

Income-generation expertise to help us translate our ambitions into sustainable growth. We are expanding fundraising and corporate partnerships, developing our retail operation and strengthening our income-generation leadership. We are looking for a trustee who can bring strategic insight into fundraising, partnerships, commercial development, and income diversification.

ROLE PROFILE - TRUSTEE

Strategic leadership, challenge and collective responsibility.

Remuneration: Voluntary, with reasonable expenses reimbursed.
Term: Initially three years, extendable up to a maximum of nine years.
Time commitment: Quarterly Board meetings, relevant committee/advisory group meetings, preparation and occasional events and ambassadorial activity.

As a trustee of Deafblind UK, you will share collective responsibility for the charity's strategic leadership, governance, and long-term sustainability. Playing a central role in ensuring our ambition is underpinned by robust governance, responsible investment, financial sustainability, and an unwavering focus on the needs and aspirations of people affected by deafblindness.

Personal Approach

We are particularly interested in people who are ambitious for Deafblind UK but thoughtful about how they achieve it.

You will be prepared to bring your expertise to the table without feeling that you must always have the answer. You will know when to challenge and when to support; when to draw on your professional experience and when to listen and learn from others.

We are looking for trustees committed to helping shape Deafblind UK's next 100 years and who bring expertise, sound judgement, and ambition to an organisation determined to ensure that nobody has to face deafblindness alone.





RESPONSIBITIES

Oversight and active contribution.

Working collectively with your fellow Trustees, you will:

- contribute to the development and oversight of Deafblind UK's vision, strategy and strategic priorities;
- ensure that the charity remains focused on achieving its charitable purposes and delivering meaningful impact for people affected by deafblindness;
- provide constructive support and challenge to the Chief Executive and senior leadership team;
- scrutinise organisational performance, finances, risk and impact and hold the executive team appropriately to account;
- ensure Deafblind UK complies with its governing document and relevant charity, company and regulatory requirements;
- safeguard the charity's reputation, values, assets and long-term financial sustainability;
- ensure that Deafblind UK's resources are used effectively and exclusively in pursuit of its charitable objectives;
- contribute your professional expertise and experience to Board discussions and decision-making;
- scrutinise Board papers, ask appropriate questions and contribute actively to discussions;
- support effective oversight of organisational risk and ensure appropriate systems of control and accountability are maintained;
- participate in an appropriate Board committee or advisory group;
- contribute to the appointment, support and, where appropriate, performance oversight of senior leadership;
- act as an ambassador for Deafblind UK, helping to raise its profile and build relationships, networks and opportunities; and
- participate in appropriate learning and development to remain effective in your role as a trustee.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Expertise, judgement, curiosty and values.

You do not need to have served as a trustee before. What matters is your ability to translate that experience into effective strategic governance and what you bring:

- significant senior-level expertise in legal practice, CQC-regulated services and housing provision, or income generation;
- a genuine commitment to Deafblind UK's vision, purpose and values;
- the ability to think strategically and contribute to discussions beyond your own professional specialism;
- sound, independent judgement and the confidence to make considered decisions;
- an ability to analyse complex information, identify key issues and assess opportunities and risks;
- intellectual curiosity and a willingness to listen, learn and consider different perspectives;
- the confidence to ask challenging questions and constructively test proposals while remaining supportive and collegiate;
- an ability to work effectively as part of a Board and accept collective responsibility for its decisions;
- high standards of integrity, discretion and accountability;
- effective communication and relationship-building skills;
- a commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility;
- an appreciation of the importance of lived experience in shaping effective services and organisational decision-making; and
- sufficient time and commitment to prepare for and participate fully in Board and relevant committee activities.

As a charity led by people with lived experience of deafblindness, we particularly welcome applications from disabled people, those from Global Majority and minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ people and others underrepresented in charity governance. We believe diverse experiences, identities and perspectives strengthen our Board and our ability to serve the communities we represent.





HOW TO APPLY

We would be delighted to hear from you.

If you would welcome the opportunity to join our Board, please forward:

- A CV or an extended biography outlining your executive and non-executive appointments, achievements, and academic and professional qualifications.
- A supporting statement (a maximum of two 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 adjustments should you be invited to an interview.

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

Closing Date:
Monday 4th January 2027
First Round Preliminary Interviews:
Wednesday 13th & Thursday 14th January
Final Panel Assessment:
Wednesday 3rd & Thursday 4th February 2027

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

Trustee Recruitment 2026

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