



Candidate Pack for Chief Executive



Welcome

I am excited to be searching for a new Chief Executive for Sense and Sense International. This is a rare opportunity to lead an incredibly unique organisation and that means we're looking for an exceptional person.

We have been extremely fortunate to have an outstanding Chief Executive in Richard Kramer who has led the organisation successfully through considerable change and transformation over the last 11 years. He is now taking early retirement and with the charity about to celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2025, it is a key year to be joining and a brilliant opportunity help shape the next stage of our journey.

Sense exists to support people living with complex disabilities, and those who are deafblind, to take part in life and enjoy the meaningful connections that spark joy.

We provide personalised services to children and adults as well as a national programme of arts, sports and wellbeing, holidays provision, and dedicated services that tackle loneliness. We also campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life. Over the last 70 years, we have developed an unrivalled depth of knowledge and expertise to help people develop the skills to enjoy everyday things like having a conversation, enjoying friendships and living independently.

Today, our work has never been more vital. There are 1.6 million people in the UK alone with complex disabilities and Sense reaches 30,000 children and adults and their family every year.

With annual income of over £80m, and c.3,000 staff and 2,500 volunteers we are a significant charity operating across the UK with international impact. Our culture is strongly values-based, and we hold those we support and the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers at the heart of all that we do.

In recent years, we have grown and diversified our income, both fundraised and trading, and we are constantly looking at how we change and innovate to address the long-term consequences of the pandemic and ongoing cost of living crisis which have created even more barriers for those we support.

We are looking for a Chief Executive who can lead us into a new strategic period, ensuring that we collectively rise to the challenges and opportunities we face. It is a crucial and exciting time to join us that offers a compelling platform for an inspiring leader who is motivated by our mission to impact.

A natural communicator and relationship builder, you will bring all the skills needed to win hearts and minds internally and externally with the support of a strong and unified Executive team and Board alongside you. You will be financially astute as we look to maximise income whilst controlling costs, and will be a long-term, strategic thinker with the vision, ambition and experience to help us achieve greater profile and recognition for our outstanding services and campaigning. Critically, you will be an inclusive leader who can demonstrate where you've made positive changes to ensure a more diverse and inclusive working culture within your career.

Now is the moment to make a difference. If, having considered the brief within this pack, you believe you have the skills, experience and qualities we are looking for, I very much hope you will apply.

Dr Justin Molloy
Chair

About Sense

For everyone living with complex disabilities. For everyone who is deafblind. Sense is here to help people communicate and experience the world. We believe that no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, should be isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential. Our experts offer support that's tailored to the individual needs of each person, whether that's at our centres, through our holidays and short breaks, or in people's own homes. In addition to practical support, we also provide information to families, and campaign for the rights of people with complex disabilities to take part in life.

Our values

Everything we do is underpinned by five core values. These values shape the way we work as we pursue our vision of a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is isolated, left out, or unable to fulfil their potential.

- **We include** We are determined to provide a place where everyone belongs. Where difference is valued and no one is left out. We take time to understand each other, however we may communicate. And we involve each other, especially in the things that affect us directly.
- **We collaborate** We bring people together and make connections. Because though we may all connect differently, we are all connected. And by sharing, learning, working and contributing together, we can achieve so much more.
- **We find a way** We think creatively, seeing potential and possibility. Always finding a way, however long it takes.
- **We challenge** We think risk is a part of life to embrace and work with, not avoid. We constantly challenge ourselves and the status quo, working hard to make the world a place for everyone. When things go wrong, we're honest, we learn, we do better.
- **We celebrate** All achievements are worth celebrating. Those moments and milestones – the ordinary and extraordinary – that give meaning and purpose to life. We notice them and celebrate. Inspiring us to keep going.

Our vision is a world where no one, no matter how complex their disabilities, is left out, isolated, or unable to fulfil their potential.

Our mission is to remove barriers to communication so that everyone has the opportunity to live their life to the full.

What we stand for

While our work is rooted in our role providing services, we also champion the rights of disabled people.

From lobbying the government and fighting for better policy, to speaking out on behalf of those who've experienced prejudice – we use our voice to build a better, more inclusive society. We're campaigning for a world where no one is left out of life.

Around the UK

We have 20 centres and colleges in communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We provide residential support in 60 services and provide lifelong opportunities for disabled people through holidays, arts, sports and health and wellbeing programmes. We have over 130 shops as well as providing online shopping opportunities.

About Sense International

Our sister charity, [Sense International](#), was established to share the expertise of Sense in resource constrained settings. Through Sense International, we are active in eight countries where we work to remove barriers for people with deafblindness, their families and communities. Partnering with local organisations, hospitals and schools and with government authorities, we deliver essential services including screening for sight and hearing impairments, inclusive and specialist education support and vocational training and livelihoods support, while advocating for the rights of people with deafblindness to be fully and meaningfully included in societies and systems.

No one Left Out of Life: Our current strategy 2021-2026

Thousands of people with complex disabilities, and those who are deafblind, are still missing out on the vital support they need.

Our goal is to support ten times more people living with complex disabilities by 2026. That's 50,000 people over 5 years. But to do that, we need everyone connected to Sense to come together in support.

Our four strategic outcomes

We are committed to four strategic outcomes to help us move a step closer to achieving our vision.

We will focus on the following areas for the people we support:

1. Children and families get the best possible start.
2. Adults are supported to live and learn at every stage of their lives.
3. Individuals are less lonely and more connected with their communities.
4. Society has increased awareness of the impact of our work and is inspired to take action.

By focusing on these outcomes, we will help more children and adults to have the opportunity to take part in life. We also hope to motivate more people to support us.



Some key outcomes that have been achieved over 2023-2024:

Outcome 1:

- We launched our national early intervention services for children, young people and families helping children to communicate, connect, and play. We provide a range of quality interventions including one to one support, pre-school groups, family fun days, and parent advice sessions. We deliver services in people's homes, in the community, and online.
- Parents can access 80+ sessions a year to build their knowledge and networks.
- We distributed cost-of-living grants of £500 to 1,000 disabled households through our Emergency Grant programme.

Outcome 2:

- We continue to support people with complex disabilities, including deafblind adults to live independently, pursue their goals, and be part of their communities across our accommodation services, day opportunities, community services and our College
- Over 90% of regulated Sense services are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission.
- We launched our Loughborough Hub and Denbigh Hub in North Wales extending our reach in local communities, and are working hard to develop our new Hub in Belfast

Outcome 3:

- 6,000 individuals and family members get the chance to make friendships through our arts, sport and wellbeing programmes.
- 230 siblings are getting dedicated support and the chance to meet others.
- 1,500 art and wellbeing packs a year sent out to people at home.
- In 2023/24, 93% of the people we surveyed across our dedicated loneliness programmes for individuals we support and for siblings reported that they have developed new connections and / or skills through engaging with our charitable programmes.
- We run over 130 retail shops based in the heart of local communities

Outcome 4:

- 300,000 people watched our Covid-19 Inquiry film. We launched a new campaign calling for greater investment in respite services to support family carers, called 'Give Carers a Break'. This campaign film was viewed more than 200,000 times on social media.
- 1,500 people with complex disabilities shared their experiences in new research.
- Last year, Sense reached 30,000 people and we're on track to reach 50,000 people by 2026.
- As of March 2024, there were just over 155,000 people actively supporting Sense through donating, campaigning and championing the rights of disabled people.

For further information please click on our [strategy](#).

To view our Annual Report and governance structures, please visit:

[Our annual report and accounts - Sense](#)

[Our Trustees - Sense](#)

Our EDI priorities for 2024–2027

As an organisation we have always aspired to be a charity with deep-rooted connections with the diverse communities we support.

We have three overarching strategic priorities, which we aim to deliver through the strategy.

1. Maximise opportunities to attract, develop, support and retain diverse representation across all levels within our organisation.
2. Embed an inclusive culture.
3. Promote the importance of practicing and supporting disability inclusion.

Our new chief executive will play a vital part, as do all our people, in promoting an inclusive culture.

We encourage you to read our full commitment as set out in our [EDI Strategy](#).



Job description

Job title: Chief Executive

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Responsible to: Chair

Direct reports: Group Director of Finance and Resources, Group Director of Engagement, Group Director of Operations, Director of Sense International and Head of Governance

Role purpose

The CEO will lead the management of the organisation; advise the Trustees on the strategic direction of the organisation and to implement Board decisions; and promote Sense's vision, ambitions, values, and objectives in everything they do.

Key responsibilities:

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of Sense's mission and strategic plan and lead the Executive Team to implement this.
- Ensure the highest quality of service to beneficiaries.
- Promote, encourage and facilitate effective cross-organisational work across Sense's activities across the UK and internationally with Sense International.
- Identify risks and opportunities across Sense's internal and external activities, and supporting, strategic change and innovation.
- Champion standards of performance and behaviour across the organisation which reflect Sense's values and maximise Sense's effectiveness.
- Attend management and Board meetings and ensure the Chair and trustees are able to work effectively.
- Work closely with members of the leadership team to maintain Sense's reputation and build high-levels of loyalty amongst supporters. Encourage imaginative, creative and effective approaches to ensure all contacts receive appropriate recognition and care.
- Lead an effective multi-disciplinary executive team, and by extension organisation, and provide motivational leadership.
- Ensure a positive and open culture is upheld where employees are motivated and work together to form a highly functioning team.
- Build partnerships and collaborate to deliver solutions for our beneficiaries as required.

Representation

- To serve as a public voice of Sense, promoting the aims and interests of Sense to external stakeholders and the public.
- To lead efforts to raise awareness of the Sense brand and profile, including the campaigning, trading, fundraising and communication activities.
- Work with the fundraising and communications teams to represent and promote the organisation to institutional funders and the public in to secure further funding and build new alliances.
- To maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders in government, parliament, charities, funders and other organisations which contribute to the achievement of Sense's mission.



Management of the organisation

- Work with the Board and the Executive Team (ET) to ensure that Sense's mission is delivered, statutory and regulatory duties are observed and that strategic and operational objectives are implemented.
- Support the Chair to develop the Board and its role.
- Work with the Group Director of Finance and Resources and ET to develop the annual budget; ensure that financial management information is provided to the Board; and to monitor performance against budget and take necessary corrective action.
- Ensure the organisation continues to support the health and wellbeing and professional development of all employees and volunteers so that they're able to realise their full potential.
- Manage the organisation and direct reports effectively, providing supervision, development and appraisals for all reports and ensure they do so for all employees.
- Review and evaluate the levels of risk to ensure appropriate governance and mitigation is in place, paying particular attention to regulated activity.
- Maintain and develop appropriate targets, KPIs, and reporting systems, to deliver high performance and ensure that relevant quality standards are met, and to hold owners to account.
- Ensure compliance with employment and equality legislation and good practice.
- Ensure that all employees, volunteers, customers, partners, and beneficiaries are respected and valued and that Sense' commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is upheld.



Person Specification

Please respond directly to the criteria listed under Knowledge and Experience in your supporting statement. Criteria listed under Parts Two and Three will be further assessed at interview for selected candidates.

Your knowledge and experience

- Experience gained as a CEO or as an Executive Director in an organisation of comparative scale and complexity.
- Substantial experience combining business and financial skills with a purpose-led mission.
- A strong track record of delivering high performance, ideally with employees and volunteers. You will also have organisational leadership and delivery experience that enables you to set the agenda, monitor deliverables and provide effective oversight.
- Strong and successful experience of influencing and developing partnerships with a range of senior external stakeholders.
- Practical experience of working as part of a Board to shape and set strategy.
- An understanding of Charity governance and funding with knowledge of income generation activities including commercial, fundraising and partnerships.
- Committed to putting the people we support at the heart of our organisational strategy and everything we do.

Your skills and abilities

- Strong communication and engagement skills; able to convey messages to a wide range of audiences and effectively role model our values.
- Able to manage complexity and to operationalise business ideas and strategies.
- Demonstrable ability and commitment to embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, fostering an inclusive culture through a one team approach across the organisation.

Your leadership style and personal attributes

- Authentic, self-aware leadership style, fostering a collaborative and coaching approach which provides an environment for others to develop and grow.
- A commitment to people with complex disabilities and to Sense's vision and values; a willingness to learn how to communicate with people with complex communication and identify the barriers to their participation in all aspects of Sense's work.
- Flexible and adaptable when leading and delivering change.
- Natural collaborator and alliance-builder, who is open minded and willing to question the status quo to explore new options.

Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is c.£165,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Contract

This is a permanent full-time appointment and is offered on a hybrid basis.

Location

London or Birmingham (Selly Oak) with travel to London and to our services across the UK.

Pension

Sense offer a matched pension contribution and will match your contributions up to 5%.

Annual leave

27 days plus bank holidays. Rising to 28 days after 2 years in service and rising up to 30 after 5 years in service.



How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Rebecca O'Connor rebecca.oconnor@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/sense-ceo/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than four sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Monday 12th August 2024

Preliminary interviews: w/c 26th August 2024

Final Panel interviews: Tuesday 17th September (Selly Oak or London tbc)

