



Final Report  
**HEEKSS funded deafblind project**  
**Easy Read summary**

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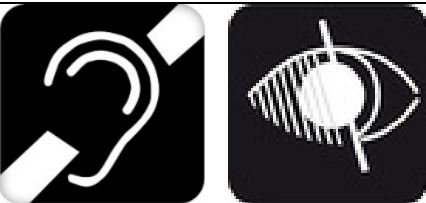
# 1. Introduction



Southdown provides housing and support to people in Sussex.



We support 212 people with a learning disability. They live in supported living or residential care services.



Two men we support are deafblind. This means that they cannot see or hear.



They live in two different services. We will call them Tyron and Niles.



If they don't get the right support Tyron and Niles will find it hard to:

- Understand what is happening now
- Understand what will happen next
- Know whether it is day or night
- Tell people what they want, like and don't like
- Understand other people
- Make choices and decisions
- Be in control of their lives
- Find their way around
- Have fun
- Feel safe – but still able to try new things



To give Tyron and Niles good support, staff need special training.

It is hard to find this training and it costs a lot of money.

This project set out to give the two teams that special training.

## 2. What we did



We worked with an organisation called Sense. They work with people who are deafblind.

Sense had trained our staff before. The training was good, but some staff were not sure that this was right for Tyron or Niles.

This time the Sense trainer spent time in the two services.



The Sense trainer spent time with Tyron and Niles. He used his hands and their hands in a special way to 'talk' to them. This is called 'talking and listening hands'.

Staff watched him doing this. They saw that Niles and Tyron liked this and could 'talk' to him using their hands and his.



He also used a special way of guiding the two men.

Staff watched him do this and saw that this worked well.

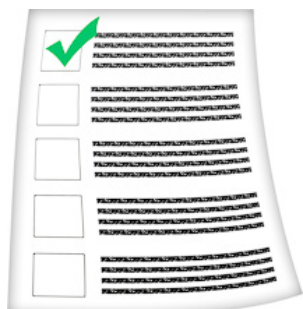


The Sense trainer watched staff supporting Niles and Tyron. He told them what they were doing well. He also told them what they could do better.



The Sense trainer talked to staff at team meetings.

He worked with the managers of the services so that they could make sure that Tyron and Niles were supported well.



He gave the teams a plan to make their support even better.



**Learn**

Some staff in both services did an on-line British Sign Language course so that they can use this with Tyron and Niles.

### 3. What happened?



Staff said that it was helpful to see the Sense trainer supporting Niles and Tyron. They could see that the way he did things worked.

Staff felt more confident using new skills.

Tyron and Niles got better support. Staff slowed down and so Tyron and Niles were happier and more relaxed.



Tyron and Niles had more control when staff used the guiding **technique**.

(‘**Technique**’ means a way of doing something).

Some staff started taking Niles and Tyron to get things they wanted in the service. This meant that Tyron and Niles found out more about where they were. Before staff had brought everything to Niles and Tyron.



Some staff became good at using ‘talking hands’ with Niles to tell him things





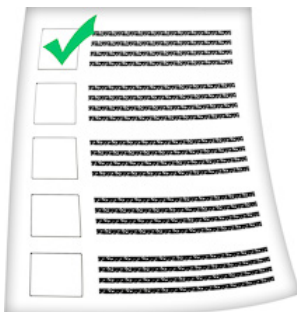
Staff found some ways to help Tyron and Niles know what time of day it was, what was happening next and to make a choice.



For example, staff supporting Tyron, and his mother, used a pine cone to suggest a walk in the forest.



Not all staff are supporting Tyron and Niles in the new, good, ways.



The managers and teams are working on the plan to make things even better.



They are filming the staff who are good to show the rest of the team. The film will also be shown to new staff.



We are making an information pack to give to new staff

## 4. What we learnt



- **Training:**  
Deafblind training on its own did not make support better. What made support better was the trainer showing staff how to support Niles and Tyron (in the service).



- **Change takes time!**  
Changing how staff do things, particularly in a big team, takes time and can be hard.



- **The manager:**  
Managers are very important in making sure support gets better.



- **Having a smaller, core team:**  
Some staff gave Niles and Tyron very good support. But some staff didn't use the new skills. It is better if not everyone supports Niles and Tyron.  
It is better to have a small group of people in the team, who use the new skills, supporting Tyron and Niles.



- **Using the new skills all the time:**  
For Tryon and Niles to have good support, all staff supporting them need to use the new skills all the time.  
The teams will need to work on this.



- **Keeping things going:**  
If you are changing things, you need to keep the pace of that change going. We had lots of problems in this project (for example the trainer was ill twice). This slowed the project down.



- **Involving families:**  
It would have been better to involve the families of Tyron and Niles earlier in the project.

## 5. What we think should happen next



We would like to see a group set up in our region so that services supporting people who are deafblind can share good practice and the cost of training.

## 6. Finally and sadly....



Tyron had lots of health needs.

He became very ill towards the end of this project and after being cared for at home (in the service), very sadly died.

We would like to thank HEEKSS for the funding that enabled us to do this work

**Jenny Spaul, Training Manager at Southdown, Aug 2018**

## 7. More information



Sense <https://www.sense.org.uk> This website has lots of information about supporting someone who is deafblind.

Deafblind UK <https://deafblind.org.uk>

For more information about this project, please contact Jenny Spaul:  
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