

Annual report from the Nordic Network on Cognition in Relation to Deafblindness to the Nordic Leader Forum of Deafblindness, 2025

Coordinator: Jonathan Reid

Membership:

Norway:

Annika Johannessen
Gro-Anita Nummedal
Joe Gibson
Kirsten Costain

Finland:

Emmi Tuomi

Sweden:

Sofia Hansdotter
Ida Eriksson
Miriam Hielscher

Denmark:

Emilie Esmann Bang Strunte
Anje Nielson

Scotland:

Jonathan Reid
Jacky Smith

The Netherlands:

Saskia Damen
Erika Pranger-Boers

Jude Nicholas (**Norway**) and Paul Hart (**Scotland**) will have involvement as consultants and research coordinators for the Network.

Aim and purpose for the network:

The Nordic Cognition Network exists to pioneer and enhance research, professional competence, and understanding of cognitive potentials in individuals with deafblindness. Our primary focus will be on developing research, methodologies, guidelines, and resource materials for professionals in the field, while also promoting a deeper understanding of cognitive functioning within a deafblind context.

The main purpose of the network is to increase professional competence in order to understand cognitive development, identify and support cognition, and recognise the relationship to learning and functioning in everyday life in people with congenital deafblindness.

Meetings:

- 22nd May 2024: Online meeting with focus on video-analysis for NVC Conference.
- 29th and 30th August 2024: Meeting in person in Oslo, Norway.
- 6th, 7th, 8th November 2024: NVC conference in Malmo, Sweden.
- 7th February 2025: Online meeting with focus on updates from Malmo conference and future planning for network.
- Further network meetings are planned for May and November 2025.

Activities (courses, publications, webinars, other):

- Network presentation at NVC conference with focus on the publications 'Revealing Hidden Potentials' and 'The Tactile Working Memory Scale'.
- The Cognition Network will be represented, present and have input for the Tactile Working Memory Scale Conference in Tromsø, Norway in November 2026.

Plans and activities for the future:

The Nordic Cognition Network will continue its work in the next period by advancing research, professional competence, and understanding of cognitive potentials in individuals with deafblindness. Our primary focus will be on developing research, methodologies, guidelines, and resource materials for professionals in the field, while also promoting a deeper understanding of cognitive functioning within a deafblind context. A key priority for the coming years is to strengthen collaboration on cognitive topics with other NVC deafblind networks, aligning with the conclusions of the 2024 NVC Network Conference in Malmö. We will work closely with these networks to identify shared areas of interest, co-produce materials, and explore how cognitive research can both enhance and be enriched by other related fields.

Network members will continue to explore areas of interest and research, contributing to a collective body of work over this four-year period. As part of our ongoing initiatives, we will develop webinars, training resources, and publications that facilitate practical application and 'demystify' the concept of cognition for practitioners working in the field.

One focused area of interest will be Brain-based Auditory and Visual Impairment (BAVI), including research into its implications for children with deafblindness. The network aims to contribute to the development and implementation of an assessment tool related to BAVI, ensuring that this work is well-integrated with other cognitive research and professional practices across the Nordic region and beyond. The network will also develop training materials, webinars, and seminars designed to support professionals in applying new insights effectively.

Over the course of the next four years, the Nordic Cognition Network will look to continue to advance understanding on cognitive research within the field, strengthen and develop collaboration with other networks and groups, and equip professionals with the tools needed to assess, understand and support cognitive potentials for individuals with deafblindness. Through ongoing partnerships and a commitment to knowledge-sharing, we will continue to develop specialist approaches within the broader architecture of deafblind practice.

On behalf of members of the network,

Jonathan Reid,
Coordinator of the Nordic Cognition Network on Congenital Deafblindness,
Glasgow, April 2025,

Deafblind Scotland.