

# My Sight Nottinghamshire Annual Review 2018-2019



**Supporting Local Blind  
and Visually Impaired People**

# **My Sight Nottinghamshire**

## **Annual Review 2018-2019**

The 2018-2019 financial year was one of significant celebrations and achievement for My Sight Notts as we completed the transformation of our new city-centre hub and moved our services into their bright new home on Heathcoat Street.

We celebrated with an opening party in September, at which we paid tribute to everyone who had contributed to the realisation of our vision to create a welcoming new home-from-home in the heart of the city for local visually impaired people.

It seemed fitting that we moved into our new hub in the same year we celebrated our 175 birthday. To mark our birthday staff and trustees took on extraordinary personal fundraising challenges, which included mountain climbing and a tandem cycle challenge!

As part of our 175th anniversary, our choir was invited to perform at the launch of Disability History Month at the Council House, and we provided a presentation on our charity's long history to the Lord Mayor and invited guests.



**Michael Conroy**  
(left)  
Chief Executive

**Jacky Fisher**  
(right)  
Chair of trustees



During 2018-19 we celebrated the first birthday of My Sight Bassetlaw and our visually impaired cricket team challenged the mighty Maasai Warriors to a game of VI cricket. We also enjoyed playing host to the Inspirational Voices Choir from Bradbury Fields, Liverpool.

We welcomed state-of-the-art equipment suppliers to Focus Days at our hub to demonstrate life-changing aids and equipment and we threw open our doors for National Eye Health Week, hosting an exhibition and inviting people to take part in healthy activities to promote eye health.

We also ran an innovative social media campaign with the support of local celebrities and with help from Notts TV we engaged the public in a discussion on the importance of regular eye tests.

As we look towards the future, we plan to capitalise on the facilities offered in our new hub, which we believe will open the door to many new and exciting partnerships and fundraising opportunities, which will allow us to deliver world class services for visually impaired people.

**Michael Conroy  
& Jackie Fisher  
cutting the  
175 years cake**



# Opening the door to our future

**Tim Reddish CBE, five-time paralympic medallist and former Chair of the British Paralympic Association was invited to cut the ribbon and officially open our new hub on Heathcoat Street in September.**

Tim was joined at the official opening by the Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Nottingham, local journalists and by some of the county's MPs. Our partners in the NHS, social care and the voluntary sector joined the party as did some of our funders who helped to make our new hub a reality.



**Celebrating the opening  
of our new hub  
with a glass of fizz**

## Our Vision

- Our aim is to develop a culture that inspires and empowers visually impaired people to achieve everything that they are capable of.
- With its bright modern decor and flexible facilities our new hub offers a welcoming environment from which to deliver popular existing services and modern new ones.
- Located in the heart of Nottingham our hub will make it easier to develop the partnerships that will encourage communities and organisations to work to make our county more inclusive.
- Our modern new building, talented team and growing partnerships will facilitate our vision to develop modern services that inspire people with sight loss to achieve their potential.

### Making a difference to Kay

“We’re all very excited about the Heathcoat Street Hub, it’s amazing to have such a welcoming and modern space to call our own, it feels like we’re finally coming home.”



**Local MP Lillian Greenwood takes a tour with Chair of Trustees, Jacky Fisher**

# 175 years of support for visually impaired people

**This year My Sight Notts celebrated 175 years of support for Nottinghamshire's visually impaired community.**

As the county's oldest charity we were invited to launch Nottingham's Disability History Month celebrations in December with a performance by our visually impaired choir and a presentation to the Lord Mayor and his invited guests.

We also decided to mark our 175th anniversary with a birthday cake at our AGM and with a number of fundraising challenges for staff and trustees.

## 175 Fundraising Appeal

Our team organised some extraordinary personal fundraisers and community groups and individuals from across Notts joined in the fun!

Three members of staff made headlines when they climbed Scotland's highest mountain, Ben Nevis wearing blindfolds! Our Finance Manager, Michelle marked her own 'big Birthday' by climbing Snowdon, and Michele, Nic and Sarah took on a fun run (Sarah ran in two!) and Chris got out his guitar for a live gig with friends!

Not to be outdone by our staff team, our trustees and President organised some fundraising events of their own to mark our birthday. Our Treasurer and his visually impaired

Tandem group took on the Cycle Live event, which saw some visually impaired cyclists and their sighted pilots cycling up to 50 miles to raise funds. Some members of the group enjoyed it so much they cycled the high speed Derby Velodrome later in the year! Other trustees hosted hog roasts, bridge-game tournaments and birthday parties.



**Intrepid trio climb Ben Nevis in blindfolds!**



**Our team of visually impaired tandem cyclists take part in Cycle Live**

## **Our Vision**

- We are proud to celebrate our history as Nottingham's oldest charity by looking towards the future and developing sustainable services that meet the needs of people today.
- We will consult with visually impaired people, our staff and volunteers as we develop a new five year business plan for 2020.
- Capitalise on the facilities offered in our new city-centre hub.
- Secure funding for a new community cafe as a place for socialising, Job skills training and income generation.
- Support our hubs to develop more fundraising activities, leading to greater independence and a sense of community identity.

## **Making a difference to Liz**

**"I'm really pleased I could do something to mark My Sight Bassetlaw's first anniversary and to say thank you to them for all the good work they do."**

# Our services make the move

The services we provide for local visually impaired people have had a busy year, making the move into our new Heathcoat Street Hub and capitalising on the opportunities it's created to adapt and modernise services.

## Eye Clinic Liaison Service

Our Eye Clinic Liaison Service (ECLO) provides emotional support, advice and signposting for patients visiting Eye Clinics at QMC. This year we supported 1,025 patients to deal with the life-changing impact of sight loss.



**Our ECLO  
supporting patients  
at QMC**

## Peer Support

At the end of the last financial year we received £10,000 of funding from the Boots Charitable Trust for our Peer Support Group. Between April 2018 and March 2019, 16 people benefitted from peer support and we have plans to deliver this vital service to around 40 people and to apply for continuation funding for next year.



## My Guide sighted Guides

Our My Guide service matches visually impaired people with a fully trained sighted guide to help reduce social isolation. The service helps people get out into the community and get more out of life. This year we supported 20 My Guide partnerships to help people live life to the full.

### Our Vision

- We are working with partners in health and social care to improve the patient pathway for eye health services and as part of this we remain committed to the provision of an ECLO in the county.
- We will seek continuation funding for our Peer Support group.
- We will continue to work with our partners at Guide Dogs to increase the number of My Guide partnerships.

### Making a difference to Rex

“I don't want to sit at home all day with no one to talk to, I want to get out and meet people. Helen helps me start conversations and meet new people. I really appreciate everything she does for me as a My Guide Volunteer, it makes such a difference to my life.”

**My Guide volunteer  
Helen helps Rex get  
out and about**



# Enablers to Independence Equipment and advice

This year we've capitalised on the central location of our hub and relocated our Support Centre from its temporary home in Victoria Centre Market. 715 people visited our new Support Centre, including 289 who had never visited before, which compares favourably to the 329 (126 new) who visited Victoria Centre. This is fantastic and bodes well for the future. 243 people benefited from our Equipment in the Community service, which also visits our hubs in Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark.

Moving to our hub enabled us to re-start our Equipment Focus Days.

## IT service

Our IT service continues to help people learn the skills needed to access the growing IT solutions available for visually impaired people. From mobile phone apps to screen readers, our flexible service offers both home-based support and an IT drop-in group twice a week.

**Our Equipment  
Centre opens its  
doors at Heathcoat**



## Our Vision

- The popularity of our Equipment and Advice services speaks for itself and we will continue to work with suppliers at the forefront of new technology so local people can explore the best aids on offer.
- We will continue to develop our new coffee morning model, moving from one to two coffee mornings a week to meet demand.
- We will continue to roll out our Equipment and Advice and IT service into our hubs in Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark.

## Making a difference to Neil

“The Equipment and Advice service is absolutely crucial, allowing people to try new equipment to see if it suits them before they decide to invest. I value it so much I’ve decided to volunteer!”

## Taking advantage of our IT drop in sessions



# Enrichment

## Our happy hubs

**Our Big Lottery funded hubs in Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Nottingham continue to provide opportunities to socialise, helping reduce loneliness and isolation. My Sight Bassetlaw, the last of our hubs to open, celebrated its first birthday in June with a consultation and cheque donation. This year our social groups were attended by over 80 local people who took advantage of the activities and support on offer. To help reduce the waiting list for our hugely popular social groups, we launched a new coffee morning, which served up coffee and support to 32 people, which means that more than 110 local visually impaired people are benefitting from the opportunity to come together for mutual support and social interaction.**

## Creative Arts

Our choir and arts groups continue to thrive, reaching new audiences through art workshops in our hubs and generating some exciting collaborative projects with Nottingham Trent University and the Spotlight Gallery Newark, which hosted a public exhibition of art by My Sight Newark. Having extended arts in our North Notts hubs, we now have 29 practicing visually impaired artists across the county.

Our choir continues to help us engage with the public, singing Christmas Carols in the Victoria Centre and performing at the official opening of Disability History Month at the Council House in Nottingham. They welcomed Liverpool's Inspiration Voices visually impaired choir in September and hope to sing in Liverpool next summer.

Having a great  
time in our  
Happy Hubs



## Our Vision

- Set up a visually impaired choir exchange with the Liverpool Inspirational Voices choir.
- Continue to work with Nottingham Trent University on the LAPVI and Textile Live projects helping to educate artists, designers and architects to create inclusive projects.
- Create a fundraising calendar of artwork produced by visually impaired artists to launch by 2020.

### Making a difference to Rob

“When I lost my hearing and then my sight I thought I’d never sing again. The opportunity to get up on stage and perform as part of the My Sight Notts Choir is a dream come true.”

### NTU LAPVI and Textile Live



# Sports & healthy lifestyles

This year we delivered 154 sports and healthy lifestyle sessions that included walking and rambling, cricket and goalball, swim and gym, which have attracted 30 visually impaired people. We have plans to re-launch our ten-pin bowling group and deliver sports in our county hubs.

## Our Vision

- We plan to launch a campaign to attract new cricket players to the Nottinghamshire Knights VI Cricket Team.
- Now that we are located more conveniently in Nottingham City Centre, we plan to reintroduce Ten-Pin Bowling.
- We plan to work with local leisure centres to encourage them to make their facilities more inclusive for visually impaired people can benefit from what's on offer.

## Making a difference to Casey

“I enjoy sport and school does its best to include me but playing with sighted kids isn't a level playing field. Here it's great to be surrounded by people who encourage me to focus on what I can achieve and not worry about what I can't.”

### Maasai cricket



# Valuing our volunteers

My Sight Notts relies on a dedicated team of over 160 volunteers, without whose support we couldn't possibly deliver the range of services that we do. This year we worked with 21 My Guide volunteers some of whom support more than one visually impaired person to get out and about, 36 charity shop volunteers, 29 social group volunteers and 6 volunteer drivers.

## Our Vision

- Review and update our volunteer recruitment processes and information.
- Continue to show appreciation for our volunteers by nominating them for awards, improving access to training and opportunities for development.
- Launch targeted recruitment campaigns to increase numbers of drivers.

## John makes a difference for others

“Being unable to drive and get out and about its a huge barrier for visually impaired people and if I can do something to help remove that barrier I'm happy to do it.”

Car driving volunteer



# Communication Services

**Communication is key to the quality of life of blind and partially sighted people. At My Sight Nottinghamshire, we aim to ensure that people have access to the same information as the wider sighted community through our quarterly newsletters, accessible website and other services that include:**

The Nottingham and District Talking Newspaper record stories of interest, news and information onto CD format. A dedicated team of nine volunteers undertake various tasks from recording CDs to mailing the completed material. Visually impaired people who access the Talking Newspaper service rely heavily on this service to remain in touch with current affairs and place great value on the efficiency and quality by which the service is constantly delivered. We also deliver the British Wireless for the Blind scheme, which provides free CD players to those who meet the eligibility criteria of this national scheme.

## Touch Transcriptions

This project offers transcription of text to Braille, audio and large print. The service also offers volunteering opportunities for visually impaired people with the aim of teaching transferable skills that will benefit their long term employment prospects.

### Our Vision

- We will seek to secure funding to upgrade our Talking Newspaper service to MP3 format, offering listeners a more flexible and modern listing option.
- We will look at other communications offerings that might include My Sight Nottinghamshire podcasts and a new facebook group, where we can engage in conversations with local visually impaired people and the wider community.



**Talking Newspaper Volunteers**



# Awareness raising campaigns

Our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities (BAME) Awareness Project raises awareness in BAME communities that Black African Caribbean or Asian people are at greater risk of developing certain serious eye conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic eye disease that can lead to serious sight loss or even blindness. This project raises awareness through existing community groups that serious sight loss is often genetic and can be prevented if caught early and encourages essential regular eye tests to detect conditions in early stages.

## Our Vision

- We will produce a Toolkit as a result of the BAME eye health awareness project, to advise internal and external audiences on how to engage with BAME communities and which messages and media are most effective in raising awareness of pertinent eye health messages.

## Raising awareness throughout the community



# Supporting services to grow

**Working to ensure the long-term sustainability of our services and helping to increase the profile of our charity is our fundraising and marketing team. Through partnership working and engagement we work hard to raise the funds needed to safeguard and develop our services and to campaign on issues affecting local people with sight loss.**

This year we improved our overall fundraising ratio (including charity shop trading) to 2.7:1, which means for every £1 we spent, we raised £2.70. This increase was largely due to success with grant applications, donations from which totalled £241,481 (up 22% on the previous year). Our charity shop income rose by 5% this year, which was largely due to the opening of our new pop-up shop in Beeston.

Grants received included contributions towards our new premises from Big Lottery 'Awards for All', The Jones 1986 Trust and Hobsons Charity. Our sincerest thanks also to J N Derbyshire Trust, C L Hill Trust, Jesse Spencer Trust, The Skerritt Trust, Thomas Farr Charity, The Primary Club and Heath Education East Midlands for grants made towards our projects and services.

Income from legacies and donations were down on the previous year which is something we are working hard to address to ensure greater sustainability for the organisation.

Our innovative National Eye Health Week campaign on social media, reached huge audiences of over 6,000 people this year, thanks in no small part to the support from local celebrities, the Lord Mayor of Nottingham and even some local MPs who helped deliver our eye health messages. We also enjoyed support from Notts TV to engage with public on the importance of regular eye tests with some great film footage which was broadcast by Notts TV and edited for us to use on our social media feeds.



## Our Vision

- To secure funding for our Peer Support Group
- To capitalise on our new building by securing funding for a new Community Cafe
- To develop a Business Plan to will help us deliver sustainable services to increasing numbers of visually impaired people.
- To develop an Impact Statement, which will help us tell the story of how our services benefit local people with sight loss.



**BBC Radio Nottingham presenter, Sarah Julian promotes eye health**

# Supporting Nottinghamshire's Blind and Visually Impaired People to get more out of life

## Get in touch



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My Sight Nottinghamshire



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