My Sight Nottinghamshire Annual Review 2019-2020

Supporting Local Blind and Visually Impaired People

3 Images show:

1. Michael Conroy CEO and Emma Lucas receiving an award from Visionary

2. A women chatting to students and handing textiles which are brightly coloured

3. A group of more then 20 people waving their hands and smiling. They are located in in one of the social spaces at the Healthcoat Street Centre in Nottingham.

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My Sight Nottinghamshire Annual Review 2019-2020

The year 2019 was a great year for our charity, as we continued to grow and develop our services for local visually impaired people.

We celebrated national recognition for our peer support group, scooping a national award for its life-changing impact. Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer supported 988 patients in their journey through one of the busiest eye clinics in the UK. Our innovative arts programmes worked with Nottingham Trent University and BBC Radio Nottingham to provide opportunities for visually impaired people to shine.

Following a successful social media campaign, we secured funding from the Big Lottery People’s Projects and opened our first community café and although our Reaching Communities lottery funding came to an end in May 2019, we’re delighted that our social groups continue to support visually impaired people.

Building on these achievements, 2020 looked like a landmark year as we prepared to launch our Five Year Plan, which set out our vision for the future and then the unthinkable happened.

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on our charity and on the lives of visually impaired people we support has been enormous.

As 2020 unfolds and we look to the future, our plans must change significantly as we respond not only to a changed landscape for fundraising, but to the changing needs of local visually impaired people.

Working with partners, funders and the visually impaired community, we’re confident our charity will rise to the challenge of these difficult times, developing exciting new ways of working and delivering services that are relevant for the new reality.

**Images show:**

1. Michael Conroy

CEO

2. Jacky Fisher

Chair of Trustees

3. My sight Notts ECLO assisting a patient. They are looking at letters in an eye test. Caption reads Supporting patients at QMC

Quotation reads: “I’m still scared of losing my sight, but coming

to Peer Support helped me feel more in control. I now believe I’ve still got a lot to live for.” Gail Clayton

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Supporting the most vulnerable

We believe no visually impaired person should have to face the life-changing impact of sight loss alone.

Our vision

Eye Clinic Liaison Service (ECLO)

Our ECLO supports patients at the QMC through what is often an emotionally traumatic time, providing support when it’s needed most. Working with health and social care, he offers information and advice, signposting patients to support services. Helping patients understand their treatment plans and comply with treatment regimes, he works to reduce avoidable blindness and deliver improved outcomes.

Award winning peer support

We believe in the power of peer support to change lives for the better.

Meeting people in a similar

situation improves

confidence and reduces the sense of isolation. People feel better informed and so are able to deal with the emotional and practical challenges of living with sight loss.

A staggering 80% of our peer support beneficiaries said they felt more confident about the future.

Image shows: Michael Conroy CEO and Emma Lucas receiving an award from Visionary

Caption reads: Life changing impact of peer support

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My Guide and befriending services

Our My Guide and befriending services match people with trained sighted guides and befrienders to help reduce social isolation. When our services were forced into lockdown in March 2020, these services played a pivotal role in supporting people with sight loss. Moving to telephone and online support, we expect these services to grow exponentially in the coming financial year.

Achievements

Number of patients supported by our ECLO – 988

Number of My Guide partnerships – 22

Peer Support: winner of the Visionary Award for Life Changing Impact

Fun fact:

Our ECLO walks around 10,000 steps each day around the eye clinics. This equates to climbing Mount Everest 199 times a year!

Quotation Reads: “Because of my vision, I’m just not confident in going out by myself. Winnie, the My Guide volunteer is such a lovely girl; she takes me out for walks and on the tram. I can get out and about a lot more.”

Dora Reece

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Enabling independence

We are committed to ensuring that visually impaired people receive the right advice and support to access the latest technology to enable them to live independent lives.

Our vision

Technology

We firmly believe technology is a great enabler. Helping visually impaired people get online and feel connected to loved ones and the world around them is truly transformational. Our technology service supports people with computer skills, training and computer access, providing practical advice and guidance on IT issues and all the latest apps.

Equipment and advice service

We believe in the power of aids and equipment to change the lives of visually impaired people, empowering them towards greater independence, helping them take back control of their daily lives. The equipment advice we offer is broad-ranging and flexible, helping people to access vision aids and independent living equipment.

Talking Newspapers

For those who want to stay connected with all the latest local news, we also provide a talking newspaper service.

Image shows: A woman demonstrating a magnifier in the Equipment and Advice Centre at the My Sight Notts Heathcoat Street Centre

Achievements

Our IT service made 221 home visits

In the year under review we hosted 98 IT groups

We’ve provided 783 pieces of equipment over the last 12 months

We welcomed 1,102 visually impaired people to our equipment and advice service

44 listeners enjoyed our talking newspaper service

Fun fact:

This year we’ve sold 615 bumpons to put onto equipment to make it more accessible. An average of two bumpons per piece of equipment, means over 300 pieces of equipment have been adapted to

support visually impaired people to become more independent.

Quote reads: “You helped me set up a smart speaker at home. It has made such a difference to me. I can listen to books and music, get the news and loads of other things. I didn’t have a clue how to set it up so having you there was a God send.”

Hadyn Collins

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Enrichment through art

Arts and choir

Our innovative arts programme helps visually impaired people express themselves creatively. Harnessing the power of art and singing, helps reduce isolation and improves mental health and wellbeing.

Our vision

During the financial year under review, we created some exciting collaborations, which enabled visually impaired people to showcase their talents.

Image shows: mark Dennison BBC Radio Nottingham Presenter on a brightly coloured background with the texts: Mark’s Big Sing BBC Radio Nottingham.

Caption Reads: Stars of BBC Radio

Quote reads: “I live with a number of health problems, including sight loss, cancer and diabetes, so it’s impossible not to get depressed sometimes. Art and choir give me a reason to get up and get out of the house. All my worries melt away for a few hours and I feel like a different person. I’m not the Wendy who walked in, I’m a happier, more confident Wendy – it’s a lifeline.”

Wendy Bradshaw

Achievements Arts

Collaboration with New Art Exchange, leading to an art workshop and gallery Touch Tour

Collaboration with Nottingham Trent University on the LAPVI Project when 16 visually impaired artists shared concepts of aesthetics over 16 sessions. Leading to LAPVI Live when our artists were joined by 15 second year textile students to create a public exhibition

Collaborations with the Harley Gallery, Mansfield and Nottinghamshire MIND at the Clay Therapy Pottery Studio

Collaboration with the Spotlight Gallery, Newark to create a public exhibition entitled ‘Ways of Seeing’

Collaboration with Newark and Sherwood Community Arts working with textile artist, Elaine Winter

Choir

Collaboration with sight loss charity Bradbury Fields culminating in an exchange visit to Liverpool for a joint concert

Collaboration with Nottingham City Council culminating in a performance at the Council House to launch Disability History Month

Collaboration with BBC Radio Nottingham for

Mark Dennison’s Big Sing culminating in a concert at the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham

Fundraising collaborations with John Lewis, Nottingham Theatre Royal and Intu Victoria Centre for Christmas carol performances.

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Enrichment through sport

Sports and healthy lifestyles

We support visually impaired people of all ages and abilities to lead healthy active lives.

Our vision

Our individual and team activities together with healthy eating events raise awareness of the importance of a healthy life style in maintaining good eye health and wellbeing.

Achievements

We delivered 147 sports and healthy lifestyle sessions ranging from Cricket and goalball to swimming and rambling

Our Goalball team,the Nottingham Sheriffs, won one silver and two bronze medals at both novice and intermediate level tournaments

Fun fact

Visually impaired walkers and volunteers attending our

Walkie Talkie Wednesday gentle walks for health have walked around 750 miles – the equivalent of walking from Nottingham to Dundee and back again!

Image shows: Six people in a park with two guide dogs

Caption reads:Enjoying Walkie Talkie walks

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Braille and Bean Café

Following a successful social media campaign in April 2019, ITV helped us celebrate our Big Lottery People’s Project win, which secured funding for our first community café.

Our vision

To support local visually impaired people with training and learning opportunities, enabling them to learn essential skills to progress towards employment. The café also provided a place for local visually impaired people and their friends and families to get together and socialise.

Achievements

Social media campaign generated 2,051 votes from our supporters

Number of visually impaired trainees – 6

Number of qualifications gained: Food Hygiene Level 2 – 8

/ COSHH – 1 / Food Hygiene Level 3 – 2

Quote reads: “I work part time in a pub, collecting glasses and some kitchen work. This is an ideal space for me to gain customer service experience and really hone my food making skills. It’s brilliant!”

Josh Brown, trainee

Image shows: A volunteer and Emma Lucas (Services Manger) in the Smart Kitchen with some cakes in front of them.

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Communities

In May 2019 our Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding came to an end. It’s a real credit to our communities, incredible volunteers and staff that

our groups in Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Nottingham continue to support visually impaired people!

Our vision:

To provide social space and peer support for people with sight loss to come together across Nottinghamshire, providing a range of interesting and fun activities and events, helping to reduce social isolation.

Over the last 12 months, our busy community groups have enjoyed various activities, including trips to the National Civil War Centre in Newark, a visit to the Swan Sanctuary in Southwell and Attenborough Nature Reserve. They’ve listened to talks from Special Edition Chocolate, Nottingham Energy Partnership and Woolly Tellers! As if this wasn’t enough, they’ve also got active and participated in arm chair exercise, yoga plus country walks, quizzes, poetry readings and many a pub lunch! The groups have also provided opportunities for members to express themselves creatively with public exhibitions at the Newark Spotlight Gallery and the Harley Gallery in Mansfield.

Image shows: Three volunteers and four service users at the My Sight Notts Thursday Group.

Caption reads: Enjoying our social groups

Achievements

Funding came to an end in May 2019 and all of our community groups continue to support visually impaired people

Number of people accessing social groups by area Bassetlaw 17

Mansfield 22

Newark 18

Nottingham 31

Total number of visually impaired beneficiaries 88.

Image shows: Service users and staff from Nottingham Express Transit (NET)

by a tram stop.

Caption reads: Our Nottingham group travel by tram

Quote reads: “I love coming to the group. I get to see my friends. I can’t go out much on my own so having this to look forward to each week makes a huge difference in my life.”

Nottingham Social Group Member

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Our volunteer heroes!

We rely on over 180 dedicated volunteers, without whom we would simply not be able to deliver the range of services for local visually impaired people that we do.

Our vision

To provide volunteers for all My Sight Notts activities, adding value to our work and enabling us to provide a whole package of support to local visually impaired people.

Achievements

Number of volunteers in total 186

Roles with the highest number of volunteers Admin & reception - 28

Social Groups - 33

Charity shops - 48

We delivered 6 sighted guide training courses during the year under review. Training 72 people to sighted guide visually impaired people.

Quote reads: “I love being a My Guide volunteer. I was matched to Elizabeth and we got on from the start. We have so much in common - we both grew up in India, which has given us a lot to talk about. I try to help her find what she needs, like telephone numbers, and I know she feels a lot less stressed now. I hope we can be friends for a good long time.”

Shukla Dhingra, My Guide volunteer

Fun fact

On average, My Sight Notts volunteers

contribute around three hours of support each month. This equates to almost 7,000 hours each year!

Image Shows: A Volunteer Receptionist and a member of staff on reception at the Heathcoat Street Centre Nottingham.

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Positive change -

campaigns and consultations

Our vision is for a fully inclusive Notts, where all citizens have equal access to essential services like health and social care and to all the opportunities on offer in our great city and county.

Our vision

We strive to ensure the voices of visually impaired people are heard through consultation and effective campaigning.

Consultation

Consultation on our 5 Year Plan

During the financial year under review, we consulted with 28 visually impaired people at our Annual General Meeting 2018-19; to obtain their views on our charity’s proposed 5 Year Plan.

NHS ICS Consultation

In February 2019 we worked with our partners in the NHS at strategic level to facilitate a consultation with 26 visually impaired people about the future of eye health services as part of the Integrated Care (ICS) Clinical and Community Strategy. Six consultees will then be invited

to take part in a Strategy Day with senior clinicians and NHS managers in the new financial year.

Image shows: Three women and two men seated around a table talking

Caption reads: NHS ICS consultations

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Campaigning

BAME project

In 2017 we launched our BAME project, developed to engage Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to raise awareness of the prevalence of specific eye conditions, the need for regular eye tests and engagement with the sight loss pathway.

The project ended in 2019 with the production of a toolkit – giving BAME leaders resources on how to support people in their communities with sight loss prevention and management.

Eye Health Week 2019

In September we joined sight loss organisations across the UK to raise awareness of the benefits of lifestyle changes in maintaining good eye health and preventing avoidable blindness. This year we took our message to the public with a fun-filled event in Nottingham City Centre that included a smoothie making bike courtesy of Pulp Friction, eye-pop- ping giant human fruit and veg and the opportunity to have your choles- terol and blood sugar levels checked courtesy of BHR Pharmaceuticals.

Access to public transport

During 2019 seven visually impaired people took part in an opportunity to orientate around a Nottingham City Transport (NCT) bus and speak to staff about access issues. 15 members of our Nottingham Thursday Community Group also took part in a Try a Tram Day with NET.

Image shows: 3 staff members from My Sight Notts in fancy dress. One as a pea pod, one as a strawberry and on as a carrot.

Caption reads: All the fun of Eye Health Week!

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Supporting services to thrive!

None of the support and services we offer to visually impaired people would be possible without sustainable funding and effective communication and awareness raising.

To all our funders, fundraisers and story tellers we’d like

to say thank you - our work would not be possible without you!

This year we improved our overall fundraising ratio to 4.2:1 up from 2.7:1 in 2018. This means for every pound spent, we’ve raised £4.20.

Trusts and Grants

Our Big Lottery funded Reaching Communities Project came to an end in May 2019. We now need to ensure the sustainability of our community groups. Group members and volunteers have stepped up to the challenge, getting involved in local fundraising.

Following a successful social media campaign, which saw 2,051 enthusiastic supporters voting for us, we secured £44,700 for our community café through a public vote as part of ITV and the People’s project.

We also received £89,159 of Lottery funding over two years

for our ‘Together Project’ to help tackle loneliness and isolation. Other grants included:

£32,000 from Health Education East Mildands

£20,000 from The Jones 1986 Charitable Trust

Thanks also to Sir John Eastwood Foundation, The Skerrit

Trust, Jesse Spencer Trust, JN Derbyshire CT, C L Hill Foundation, Primary Club and the Poysers Fund for their valuable contributions.

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Charity shops

Although we benefitted from our pop up shop at Beeston for longer than anticipated, it was a challenging year for our charity shops, which like the rest of the high street, saw a decline in income. COVID-19 forced the temporary closure of all our shops at the end of the financial year.

Events

Our annual Firework event at Nottingham Racecourse raised £3,000 Len Jackson our President and his wife raised £4,193 through their fab- ulous production of Alan Bennett’s Talking Head Monologues

and £1,500 through their annual quiz.

Corporate donations

Newark and Lincs Co-op - £756 Meadows & City Centre Co-op - £3,698

Image shows: A group of more then 20 people waving their hands and smiling. They are located in in one of the social spaces at the Healthcoat Street Centre in Nottingham.

Caption reads: Celebrating our Lottery grant on ITV

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

Get in touch

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