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**More than £260,000 awarded for projects supporting blind and partially sighted people and addressing preventable sight loss in London.**

The Vision Foundation, London’s sight loss charity, has today announced the roll-out of more than £260,000 across London with seven grants spanning £9,500 to £50,000 going to local projects.

These range from an innovative podcast production project aiming to give visually impaired people the confidence, skills and experience for a career in broadcasting, to a targeted employment programme for young blind and partially sighted people to help them secure meaningful full time paid work.

Projects were assessed by the Vision Foundation’s Grants and Impact Advisory Committee made up of members of London’s visually impaired community. Applications were evaluated against set criteria including the level of impact on the lives of people living with or facing sight loss, the measurable need for the project, and the ongoing or wider benefit beyond the end of the grant. Funding recommendations also considered a good geographic spread across London; included a variety of project types; and supported a range of age groups.

Olivia Curno, Chief Executive of the Vision Foundation, said of the grants, “This exciting round of Vision Foundation grants will enable seven unique projects which will enhance the lives of blind and partially sighted people across the capital. The Vision Foundation supports projects that reflect the real issues impacting blind and partially sighted people. We’re so grateful for the hard work and commitment of passionate community champions who we know will unlock the opportunity this funding brings. I congratulate each of the successful organisations and look forward to seeing these brilliant ideas come to life.”

Darren Barker, Vision Foundation Trustee and Chair of the Grants and Impact Advisory Committee said, “The pandemic has had a huge impact on the visually impaired community over the past year and we believe each of the innovative projects we have chosen has the potential to be a catalyst for wider change. The Vision Foundation plays a critical role as a kick-starter for initiatives that wouldn’t get support elsewhere.”

Disability Advice Service Lambeth (dasl) will work with 50 visually impaired people from across London, over two years, to develop their radio and podcasting skills. The grant covers the costs of a coordinator to lead and develop the project, provide technical support to develop training and support with editing and production, plus funding to purchase voice recorders and microphone equipment.

Abs Tripp, Community Development Team Leader at Disability Advice Service Lambeth said, “This grant from the Vision Foundation will make a huge difference to the community we serve. Podcasting provides a unique opportunity for blind and partially sighted people to share their lives and experiences with the world, gain experience and technical knowledge while building their confidence and resilience.”

The Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC) will provide bespoke, 1-2-1 employment support to young blind and partially sighted young people living in London (aged 16-25). Activities will focus on soft and practical skills development and increasing knowledge of the job market. The Vision Foundation funding will cover the costs of an Employment Support Adviser, recruitment of participants, staff travel and monitoring & evaluation of the project.

Sue Sharp, Deputy Chief Executive at the Royal Society for Blind Children said, “Employment rates for blind and partially sighted people continue to be shockingly low. This project funded by the Vision Foundation will boost young peoples’ opportunities and help them get that ever important first step on the career ladder.”

The full list of projects receiving Vision Foundation grants today totalling £260,809 are:

* + - 1. **Blind Veterans UK - £50,000**

Remote support services for older visually impaired people, including rehabilitation interventions, activities of daily living and creative activities.

* + - 1. **SeeAbility - £50,000**

**Recruitment of two roles to advocate for the commissioning of the Learning Disability eye care pathway across all London boroughs.**

* + - 1. **Disability Advice Service Lambeth - £49,979**

**Working age visually impaired adults to learn how to present, interview, produce and promote weekly radio chat show and podcasts.**

* + - 1. **Royal Society for Blind Children - £47,450**

**1-2-1 employment support for young people aged 16-25 and engagement with employers through workshops and advice services.**

* + - 1. **Metro Sports and Social Club (Metro Blind Sport) - £43,890**

**Online home-based and in-person community-based dance programme to engage young visually impaired people and adults from the Asian community in physical activity.**

* + - 1. **Macular Society - £9,990**

**Recruitment and training of volunteer telephone befrienders.**

* + - 1. **Sutton Vision - £9,500**

**Recruitment of assistive technology co-ordinator.**

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Notes to Editors:

* The [Vision Foundation](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/shops/west-norwood/) is London’s leading sight loss charity supporting the city’s best projects for blind and partially sighted people. The charity celebrates its centenary anniversary in 2021 and is launching its biggest fundraising appeal in its history; to raise £1m to fund employment projects for blind and partially sighted people in the capital.

With a mission to make London a shining example of a sight loss aware city, the Vision Foundation works to transform the lives of people facing or living with sight loss by funding projects which inform, empower and include. Over the last 100 years, they have distributed more than £30m to sight loss organisations to fund vital innovative projects that are changing lives.

* The Vision Fund is designed to support organisations delivering services directly to people living with or facing sight loss across London, and organisations that are expert in their fields but may not be reaching blind and partially sighted people. The Vision Fund aims to address the most pressing issues affecting people in London today. We support organisations and projects which can demonstrate a track record of success, or ideas that need an innovative early funder to give them a chance.
* There are an estimated 201,000 people in London living with sight loss today, but a further 680,000 (1 in 12) adults are living with a sight threatening condition such as diabetes or heart disease. Without intervention, these figures are set to increase significantly by 2030 (an estimated 295,000 will be living with sight loss, 874,000 with a sight threatening condition) [[1]](#endnote-1)[i].

1. [i] RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool, Royal National Institute for Blind People, April 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)