



## **Annual Report for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**



Launch of our new befriending service  
(Picture shows two people enjoying a mug of tea)

Registered charity number: 1080986  
Company number: 3920526

## Chair and Chief Executive's Report

Over the past year, we have seen our services return to 'more normal' delivery. Face-to-face service delivery has once again become the norm, and our group activities have resumed. We have been mindful that while some people were keen to get back to face-to-face services, after nearly three years of Covid restrictions, some people were nervous of more community based interaction. We have worked hard to reassure people that our services are safe, and we have provided additional support for some people to get out and about.

*"I hadn't been out much at all over Covid, and I wasn't sure if I wanted to come today, but I am so glad that I did. I've learnt so much and someone is going to come out and see me to help me see things better in the kitchen."*

Mrs N, following a VIP information event, February 2023.

Our low vision and rehabilitation services have been busy with new referrals and visiting people who needed a follow-up after receiving telephone or doorstep support over Covid. We wanted to ensure that people had received the best and most appropriate service and not just relying on a 'temporary fix' to a problem.

Over the Covid restrictions most of our work with children and young people moved to on-line sessions, with regular sessions run via Zoom group calls. This year we resumed face-to-face work with the groups and all of the children and young people were keen to get back to group activities.

Our social activities for visually impaired adults resumed, and whilst a little slow to start, activities saw increasing numbers attend and benefit from peer support.

Over the year, we sent out three newsletters to 5,000 visually impaired service users on our database. The newsletters contained information about our services, new developments and how people could contact us.

As a fundraising charity, every year we rely on the generosity of the public, and of grant making trusts and organisations for around two thirds of our income. We have ventured back into some community fundraising, continued with our collection boxes in local businesses and with our service users, and we have been nominated as the 'charity of the year' for some local fundraising groups.

Whilst this report is mainly a reflection of our work in 2022/23, it is important to recognise that moving forward we continue to face a number of challenges; not least the current cost of living crisis that effects everyone – our staff, volunteers and of course our service users. With high inflation, we are also experiencing increasing costs of running the charity. Inevitably, our service commissioners will face difficult decisions about spending and we will need to find new and creative ways of planning, funding and delivering our work, ensuring that our services to visually impaired people in Derbyshire continue.

This report gives a flavour of our work over the past year. We hope you enjoy reading about our achievements.



Claire Winfield  
Chief Executive Officer



Martin Wilson  
Chair of Trustees

## **Key Achievements 2022-23**

Throughout the year, SSD focused on getting all of our face-to-face services back-up and running across the county. We took the opportunity to review service implementation, and ensure that we retained any good practice or service improvements that we had learned from service changes during Covid. For example, our telephone triage had improved and refined and the additional questions asked have remained in place, helping staff tailor services delivered at any subsequent home visit.

Over the year we had a number of successes and achievements, too many to mention individually and all of which were down to the hard work and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters. Highlights include:

- Following a contract extension of three years, we had to re-tender for the Derbyshire County Council contract delivering rehabilitation, advice, information and support to visually impaired people. We found out in January 2023 that we had been successful in our bid, with the contract award starting in April 2023 for five years.
- Our contract to provide Low Vision services and equipment was once again renewed. The service runs in partnership with accredited community optometrists, providing magnification and lighting to eligible people in Derby City and Derbyshire County areas.
- Our 'Living Well' project was, once again, extended for another year and continued to provide an essential service to those who needed additional support. Our worker who had been in post since the project began in 2017 retired, however, we were able to fill the role quickly so that services were not disrupted.
- We were able to host our second Sense Tech day in May 2022. Sixteen exhibitors gathered to display and demonstrate a wide range of IT and electronic equipment to improve the lives of people living with sight loss. 96 people attended which

was a great turn out for our first IT event after the various Covid lock-downs.

- In September, we dedicated a week of activities to the themes for National Eye Health Week. Setting up stands at various locations around the City and County, and promoting activities and information on our Social Media sites helped to raise awareness about sight loss and about good eye health.

## **Our Services During the Year**

### **Hospital Service**

During the year, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) were busier than ever as clinics saw increased numbers of patients. Once again our ECLOs are seeing more patients being given a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI), leading to increased referrals to our other services.

As well as providing essential services to people in clinic, our ECLOs also make contact with patients by phone to follow-up on referrals and CVIs. They also work with the wider hospital teams to promote SSD sight loss services.

*“The service was very reassuring. I got a follow up call from the ECLO to check that I’d received all of the information they’d sent to me about my eye condition, and ask if I had any questions.”*

Eye Clinic Patient, September 2022

### **Rehabilitation Service**

Under contract from Derbyshire County Council, our qualified Vision Rehabilitation Specialists and Rehabilitation Support Workers, assist people with sight loss to maintain their independence.

During 2022/23, we supported 727 people with rehabilitation services, training, and equipment. This ranged from issuing talking clocks and liquid level indicators; through to training people to use long canes to navigate their way around when out and about.

*"I am so very grateful to all the staff at SSD who have empowered me to regain my confidence and to start to live the life that I want. It may be a different life than I envisaged for myself before sight loss but it is good and getting better. Thank you".*

Rehab service user June 2022

### **Low Vision Aid Scheme**

During 2022/23 the LVA service continued to supply equipment such as magnifiers, lamps and shaded spectacles to enable visually impaired people to maximise the use of residual vision. 854 people benefited from the service, (608 of these referred through SSD) a rise from the previous year.

Over the year, we moved back to a home visit service for low vision assessments. This allows the assessor to see the lighting arrangements in the person's home and recommend equipment or simple home layout ideas to improve vision.

### **Visually Impaired People's (VIP) Information Days**

Over the year we managed to deliver all 12 planned information events. We continued to encourage people to pre-book a time slot to attend, but lifted this as a requirement (put in place over Covid) so that people could choose to just drop-in. The events were well attended with 430 people attending.

The events are targeted at newly registered people, but are open to anyone with sight loss, their families and carers and any professionals who may wish to attend.

*"I was told about the information session when I went to the hospital eye clinic. I am so pleased that I came as I never thought there would be so much available. I've arranged for someone from the SSD team to come out and see me at home, and I am thinking of buying an electronic magnifier."*

VIP day visitor, Chesterfield 2022

## **Social Activities**

During 2022/23 we resumed our social activities, recruiting a new member of staff to develop and deliver a programme of events. A rolling calendar of activities included organised walks, theatre trips with tactile tours and audio description, meals out, museum visits, tenpin bowling, music recitals and a variety of other activities.

*“It’s been really good to meet up with other people and do something nice for a change. I would never normally be able to come bowling – it’s not something you can do on your own.”*

Service user, Derby September 2022.

## **Living Well Service**

Our ‘Living Well’ project grant was once again extended, allowing us to run the project over the year. Funded by the Integrated Care Board, (ICB), the service worked with 58 people.

All of the work took place face-to-face and this really helped with individual planning, and building trust and rapport with service users.

*“I am so thankful that (Project Worker) came to see me. She has really helped me to focus on the things I can do, and places I can still go to. After the last two years I wondered if I’d ever go out again, but I am starting to build up my confidence, and even though I can’t see it, I know there is light at the end of the tunnel!”*

Living Well service user, February 2023

## **Mobile Resource Centre**

Over the year, the Mobile Resource Centre/Pop-Up (MRC) increased its presence across Derbyshire. As Covid restrictions ended, we found that many of our long standing hosts, and some new ones, were happy to have us back. Thanks to our dedicated and experienced volunteers, we attended 48 venues (33 more than the previous year) and provided information to 427 people.



## Children and Young People's Services

During 2022/23 we ran a programme of activities and outings, working with 32 visually impaired children and their siblings.

Evening visits to 'Clip 'n Climb' and trampolining proved popular. A programme of school holiday activities was developed with the group members and included trips to Alton Towers, Chatsworth Farm, Accessible Bikes, and other places of interest.

In April 2022, we ran a residential event at Whitemoor Lakes Activity Centre in Staffordshire. 11 children attended, 7 with visual impairments and 4 siblings. Activities included an assault course, zip wire, climbing and canoeing. The group learned about team working and developed their communication skills. Feedback was extremely positive, with all participants eager to repeat the experience.

*"The instructors really helped me with the abseil. It meant I felt safe and could do it. After I did it once, I did it two more times. I tried to do a Spiderman and hang upside down. It was brilliant!"*

Young person on the residential trip, April 2022



(Picture shows the back of six young people rowing.)



## **Resource Centres and Call Helpline**

Our Derby and Chesterfield offices were fully opened to the public and we were once again able to welcome people to the resource areas in each office so that people could come to see and try out equipment.

We continued to deal with high levels of calls to our helpline, dealing with 3,170 calls over the year.

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteers at Sight Support Derbyshire lie at the heart of our service delivery efforts. It is because of their selfless and dedicated service we are able to reach out to blind and visually impaired people throughout Derbyshire.

Over 2022/23 we began to welcome back many of our volunteers as our community based activities resumed. Having been without a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator since the beginning of Covid, and planning for an up-turn in volunteering activity, we advertised the position in March 2023. A new coordinator started in May 2023.

Despite reduced opportunities for many of our volunteers to engage, we did retain 78 over the year. Volunteers did come in to help with the Mobile Resource Service, and to provide admin support in fundraising. We also began to welcome them back for Social activities as our groups began meeting again.

A number of volunteers also came in to the office to help get our newsletter out. Three editions went out over the year with 5,000 sent each time. That's 15,000 envelopes stuffed and sent!

## **Plans for 2023-24**

Despite the financial outlook remaining poor, and the 'cost of living crisis' affecting everyone, we remain strong and determined to continue to provide quality services to the thousands of blind and visually impaired people who depend upon us. To that end, in the coming year we will be focusing on the following:

- Following effective grant fundraising for developing a befriending scheme, we will ensure set-up and delivery of the

service for visually impaired people in Derbyshire. Initially funded for two years, we hope that by demonstrating a need, we will attract ongoing funding.

- Taking steps to ensure the continuation of all existing services including seeking funding for those services whose funding is due to end.
- Using lessons learned during the coronavirus pandemic to develop service responses, particularly those reliant on technical solutions.
- Building on our links with statutory and community organisations, aiming to ensure that the needs of visually impaired people in Derbyshire are met.
- Maintaining (and where possible increasing) the numbers of visually impaired people we support across the City and County.
- Linking with other visual impairment charities across the region (and where relevant country) to look at new innovation and best practice to inform our future work.
- Working with the Board to increase Board membership based on a skills analysis.
- Working to ensure we remain a good employer in order to attract new staff when needed.

## **Finances 2022/23**

In comparison to 2021/22, income decreased by £93,553 but expenditure increased by £7,237, resulting in a decrease in funds of £100,790. This decrease was due to the generous funding, received in the previous year towards the purchase of our freehold office building, and the costs attached to that.

The surplus for the year was £1,997, against 2021/22 surplus of £102,787.

Total reserves were £796,408, broken down as follows:

Restricted Funds	£102,914
General Funds	£693,494 (incl £100 share capital)

The General Funds comprise of £388,080 for the office building and £305,414 of other unrestricted funds. Trustees are delighted that, having achieved the aim of owning our own Head Office premises last year, we also managed to retain a healthy level of free reserves.

In the current funding environment, the Trustees believe that holding £305,414 of free reserves is a prudent course of action against future uncertainties.

## Finances 2022/2023

SIGHT SUPPORT DERBYSHIRE FINANCES 2022/2023	
Expenditure	£
VIP Assessment & Rehab'n Services	253,304
VIP Specialist Equipment Supplies	82,481
Hospital Eye Clinic Information Service	45,295
VIP Social & Sporting Activities	26,889
Resource Centre Chesterfield	5,281
Support Costs	118,043
<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>531,293</b>
Generating Funds & Publicity	44,522
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>575,815</b>

2022/2023	
Income	£
Donations	21,320
Legacies	9,600
Fundraising Activities & Events	13,933
Grants	149,440
Statutory Contracts	373,742
Sale of Aids & Equipment	5,547
Sporting & Social Contributions	1,077
Interest on Investments	3,153
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>577,812</b>
<b>Surplus for year</b>	<b>1,997</b>

Resources	
General Funds - May be used for any authorised activity	305,414
Designated Funds - Fixed Asset Fund	388,080
Restricted Funds - Must be spent in accordance with Donor's wishes	102,914
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>796,408</b>
<b>Represented by</b>	
Tangible Assets	388,080
Investments	5,100
Net Current Assets - Stock, Debtors, Cash, Investments & Deposits less Creditors	403,228
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>796,408</b>

## **Acknowledgements for 2022/23**

We are always very grateful to any individual, company or organisation that donates money to our charity. Throughout the year we have numerous and generous donations and grants made, not all of which we can list here. Our thanks go to all of those who make a contribution, we would particularly like to thank:

BBC Children in Need  
Chesterfield Royal Hospital  
Derby and District Oddfellows  
Derby Daybreak Rotary Club  
Derbyshire County Council  
Derbyshire Integrated Care Board  
Derbyshire County Cricket Ladies Luncheon Club  
Dolphin Computer Access Ltd  
Eastwood Park Petanque Club  
Masonic Charitable Foundation  
OcuPlan Limited  
Postcode Community Trust  
Rotary Club of Chesterfield Scarsdale  
Select Convenience Store, Derby Bus Station  
The Arnold Clark Community Fund  
The Belmayne Foundation  
The Ireland Roddan Trust  
The Kentown Wizard Foundation  
The Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust  
The Lubrizol Corporation  
The Mary Potter Convent Hospital Trust  
The Masonic Charitable Foundation  
The Molly Forster Charitable Trust  
The Mrs Yvonne Flux Charitable Trust  
The Primary Club  
The Schuh Trust  
The Sir John Sumner's Trust  
The Toyota Manufacturing UK Charitable Trust  
The Woodroffe Benton Foundation  
VisionAid Technologies Ltd

We are also extremely grateful to those people who left us a legacy in their Will this year and to those who donated in memory of a loved one. Many of these gifts are left by people who have benefited directly from our services and would like other visually impaired people to be able to do the same.

## **Contact**

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