



Annual Report for year ended 31st March 2025



(Picture shows a participant and SSD staff member looking at drums as part of the at the 'Music Vision Room' project in collaboration with Mendi Singh)

Registered charity number: 1080986
Company number: 3920526

Chair and Chief Executive's Report

Over the past year we have continued to provide a wide range of services across Derby and Derbyshire. Despite the difficult economic climate faced by us, and by many of our funders, we have continued to develop our services. Our Befriending Service has gone from strength to strength, matching older people with sight loss to a volunteer who can call them or visit them at home.

We moved into the second year of service delivery on the Derbyshire County Council contract, providing rehabilitation, advice and support. We worked closely with the Council to look at how we could improve access to qualified Vision Rehabilitation Specialists. As a result, during the year a member of Sight Support Derbyshire's staff enrolled on a two-year apprenticeship course to achieve the recognised qualification. This was a first for the organisation and having an apprentice has gone so well, Trustees are already considering another apprenticeship next year.

Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) have been busy at both Royal Derby and Chesterfield Royal Hospitals. The Eye Clinics continue to be extremely busy. Our ECLOs often provide the first port of call to those who receive a diagnosis of sight loss; helping patients to understand their condition and providing advice and support to help people come to terms with the news. During the year our ECLOs have been involved in a Health pilot project, looking at how Certificates of Visual Impairment might be accessed in the community rather than needing a visit to the hospital. The pilot will, initially focus on those people who cannot get into clinic and so might miss out on being certified as visually impaired.

During the year we came to the end of our three-year Children in Need funded work. Unfortunately, we were not successful in another bid to them, but we did secure funding from other

Trusts and from generous donations from supporters to be able to continue our valuable children & young people's work. A programme of fun-packed activities and events ran, with new activities including table tennis, and a visit to an Escape Room.

Over the year, we sent out three newsletters to 5,000 visually impaired service users, keeping them up-to-date with our work.

As always, we are extremely grateful for the support and hard work of our volunteers. It is only with their support that we can provide the range of support that we do. Over the year we retained 61 active volunteers!

As a fund-raising charity, every year we rely on the generosity of the public, and of grant making trusts and organisations for much of our income. In an increasingly competitive economic environment, raising funds continues to be a challenge. However, with a close eye on ensuring we make every pound count, we have delivered services and improved the lives of people with sight loss in Derbyshire.

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 2024-25

Throughout the year, SSD services have, once again, been busy with new referrals, and with people who return for follow up support as their eyesight changes (and deteriorates). We do quality check our work, and we regularly get positive feedback about how our services have helped increase confidence, motivation, and independence.

Over the year, we have 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:

- In April 2024 we entered the second year of our five-year contract with Derbyshire County Council providing rehabilitation, advice, information and support to visually impaired people. Having provided similar services for many years, our performance continued with high levels of satisfaction. This contract remains our biggest single source of income and provides some stability for longer term planning across the organisation.
- 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. Following extensive networking by our dedicated worker, referrals to the service were up, and positive feedback was received from those using the service.
- We were able to host our fourth SenseTech day in May 2024. Sixteen exhibitors gathered to display and demonstrate a wide range of I.T and electronic equipment to improve the lives of people living with sight loss. 110

people attended and provided positive feedback about the event.

- In our second year of service delivery of the Befriending Service, we were able to match a further thirty-eight people with a befriending volunteer.

Our Services During the Year

Hospital Service

During the year, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) continued to see high numbers of patients who were being registered or had an eye condition leading to sight loss. Our two ECLOs, based at Chesterfield Royal Hospital, and Royal Derby Hospital had contact with over 1,145 patients during the year (184 more than the previous year).

As well as providing essential services to people in clinic, our ECLOs also made 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.

“It was good to speak with you yesterday (ECLO) and I wish I had called you sooner. The information you gave me was very useful and I came away from our call in a much more positive frame of mind, which I am attributing to your caring and friendly approach. Many thanks.”

Eye Clinic Patient, September 2024

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 2024/25, we supported 596 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 really wish I had accepted help with my sight loss before now. I honestly thought that there was nothing anyone could do for me. It’s true that no one can give me my eyesight back, but (the Vision Rehabilitation Specialist) has given me some of my independence back, and to me, that means the world.”

Service user October 2024

Low Vision Aid Scheme

During 2024/25 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. 793 people benefited from the service, (663 of these referred through SSD).

With various changes at the Integrated Care Board, the service review we had expected before the contract ended in September did not happen and so the contract rolled over for the full year.

Visually Impaired People’s (VIP) Information Days

Over the year we managed to deliver 12 planned information events. The sessions were well attended with 482 people visiting the events, an increase from the previous year.

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.

The mobile resource service, staffed predominantly by our volunteers set up 28 sessions and dealt with 283 enquiries.

“Seeing all the equipment in one place has been very good. It’s given me an idea about what sort of things could be useful to me. The staff have all been very friendly and patient in explaining what the equipment does and have even offered to come to my home to help.”

VIP day visitor, Chesterfield 2024

Social Activities

During 2024/25 we organised a rolling calendar of activities including organised walks, theatre trips with tactile tours and audio description, meals out, museum visits, ten pin bowling, music recitals and a variety of other activities. The programmes were planned with the service users who attend, giving them a chance to take greater ownership of the groups.

“It’s the first time I’ve been out in a fortnight, and I’ve loved it! People are so friendly and helpful and it gives me a real boost to come along.”

Service user attending the canal boat trip, June 2024

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 works with visually impaired people who have additional health issues, and need that little bit of extra support.

During the year the new Living Well Coordinator did an excellent job of promoting the service and generating referrals. We completed work with sixty-one people; an increase of twelve from the previous year. A new support planning format was developed, and improved monitoring put in place.

Outcomes for the people going through the Living Well service were extremely positive, with all service users reporting

improved health and well-being.

“I didn’t honestly think that there was so much help available. (LW Worker) has helped me find out about benefits that I now claim, and she helped me get back into the craft activities I used to enjoy. I can’t see very well to do detailed stitch work, but the group I go to all help me and it’s lovely to chat with others.”

Service user, February 2025

Children and Young People’s Services

Our funding for the children and young people’s group from Children in Need ended in 2024, and our bid for a further three years was not successful. However, we were successful in attracting alternative small grants, and we used our own restricted reserves to continue with activities. The change in funding has meant that we have had an opportunity to work closely with our children, young people, and their families to review our service offer, making sure it is appropriate and sustainable moving forward.

The group continued to meet regularly during term time for evening visits to activities such as ‘Clip ’n Climb’, cinema and trampolining. During the school holidays, full day visits and activities were organised.

Following a group visit to ‘Circus Stars’, one child told us:

“I’ve liked coming here with my new friends. It’s a bit like seeing Britain’s Got Talent live. The acrobats are amazing, one of them gave me a ‘high-five’ after the show.”

Service User October 2024

Resource Centres and Call Helpline

Our Derby and Chesterfield offices both have equipment available for people to come and view, and to 'try before they buy'.

We continued to deal with high levels of calls to our helpline, dealing with 3,046 calls over the year.

Volunteers

Our volunteers lie at the heart of our service delivery efforts. It is because of their selfless and dedicated service that we are able to reach out to so many blind and visually impaired people in need throughout Derbyshire. In 2024/25 we retained 61 active volunteers overall; but we did see a bigger 'churn' in turnover. Like many other charities who use volunteers, we have more recently found recruitment and retention an ongoing challenge.

Our Befriending service continues to create the biggest demand for new volunteers. Our Volunteer Coordinator advertises in creative ways across Derbyshire to try and find volunteer befrienders to match with our service users.

Moving forward we aim to recruit new volunteers and to provide structured support to those already working with us. We know from experience that without our loyal and dedicated volunteers we cannot provide the wide range of support services to our beneficiaries.

A number of volunteers also came in to the offices 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 2025-26

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:

- Taking steps to ensure the continuation of all existing services including seeking funding for those services whose funding is due to end.
- 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.
- Striving to increase our ECLLO service at Royal Derby Hospital, from three funded days to five each week.
- 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.
- Updating policies and procedures to ensure they reflect legislation, best practice and our working arrangements.
- Working with the Board to increase Board membership based on our skills analysis.
- Working to ensure we remain a good employer, in order to attract new staff when needed.
- Review the Rehabilitation Apprenticeship in place and consider another opportunity for a member of SSD staff.

Finances 2024/25

In comparison to the previous year, 2024/25 income increased by £152,541 but expenditure also increased by £60,679, resulting in an increase in funds of £91,862 The surplus for the year was £109,533, against last year’s surplus of £17,671.

Total reserves were £923,612, broken down as follows:

Restricted Funds	£ 96,416
General Funds	£827,196

The General Funds comprise of £390,139 for the Office building and vehicle, and £437,057 for designated/unrestricted funds.

Having achieved the aim of owning our own Head Office, Trustees were pleased to have increased free reserves and made plans to designate some unrestricted funds for future building maintenance and planned repairs fund.

SIGHT SUPPORT DERBYSHIRE FINANCES 2024/2025	
Expenditure	£
VIP Assessment & Rehabilitation Services	300,200
VIP Specialist Equipment Supplies	89,953
Hospital Eye Clinic Information Service	55,352
VIP Social & Sporting Activities	19,324
Resource Centre Chesterfield	6,383
Support Costs	99,573
Total Cost of Services	570,785
Generating Funds & Publicity	51,453
Total Expenditure	622,238
Income	£
Donations	21,716
Legacies	134,070
Fundraising Activities & Events	9,569
Grants	135,240
Statutory Contracts	399,505
Sale of Aids & Equipment	11,267
Sporting & Social Contributions	1,719
Interest on Investments	17,768
Other Income	917
Total Income	731,771
Surplus for year	109,533

Resources	
General Funds -	
May be used for any authorised activity	418,513
Designated Funds -	
Fixed Asset Fund	408,683
Restricted Funds -	
Must be spent in accordance with	
Donor's wishes	96,416
Total Funds	923,612
Represented by	
Tangible Assets	390,139
Investments	5,000
Net Current Assets -	
Stock, Debtors, Cash, Investments & Deposits less	
Creditors	528,473
Total Net Assets	923,612

Acknowledgements for 2024/25

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 have space to list here. Our thanks go to all of those who make a contribution, we would particularly like to thank:

Ambergate Charitable Trust
Christopher Nieper Foundation
Co-op Local Community Fund
Derwent Valley Wind Band
Himat Tanna Charitable Trust
Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust
Matlock and District Talking Newspaper Association
Miss Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
Royal Derby Hospital
St Nicholas Players
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
The Alan Robert Laken Charitable Trust
The Arnold Clark Community Fund
The FDR Trust
The Felicity Wilde Charitable Trust
The Gledswood Charitable Trust
The Kentown Wizard Foundation
The Manson Family Charitable Trust
The Masonic Charitable Foundation
The Mrs Yvonne Flux Charitable Trust
The Pamela Barlow Charitable Trust
The Pat Newman Memorial Trust
The Rotary Club of Chesterfield Scarsdale Trust Fund
The Theodore Maxxy Charitable Trust
The Toyota Manufacturing UK Charitable Trust
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.

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