



**Sight
Scotland**

iSight

Winter 2025 | sightscotland.org.uk



Every child can find their superpower



Dear Supporter

Welcome to the latest edition of iSight, a magazine that celebrates the incredible work happening across our charity and offers a heartfelt thank you to all our supporters.

At Sight Scotland, we are dedicated to helping people of all visual abilities thrive. This mission would not be possible without your generosity. Your donations and fundraising efforts allow us to deliver essential services, campaign for meaningful change, and support research into the prevention and treatment of eye conditions.

We place lived experience at the heart of everything we do. We listen to and work with people affected by vision loss to make sure that every penny we raise provides the kind of support which will make a lasting difference to those who need it most.

In this issue, we shine a spotlight on our inspiring winter campaign featuring Jemima, who recently graduated from the Royal Blind School and is now beginning an exciting new chapter at the Royal National College for the Blind. Her story highlights her braille “superpower” and the vital support that helped her thrive. It is both uplifting and deeply motivating, and we

are incredibly proud of the remarkable progress she has made.

We also celebrate our amazing Kiltwalkers, including eight-year-old Aleks, who impressively completed his fourth Kiltwalk in support of Sight Scotland.

We hope you enjoy reading about the real impact you make and the lives you continue to transform.

Karen Hodgins

Head of Fundraising and Audience Development.



Sight Scotland Support Line
Talk to us on **0800 024 8973**
Open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Did you know?

If you hold an Eye +1 National Entitlement Card (NEC), you and a companion can now travel free of charge onboard trains in Scotland. This is part of a pilot scheme launched in April 2025, running for one year, aimed at making rail travel more accessible for visually impaired passengers and their companions.

iSight in alternative formats. To receive iSight in large print, braille or audio CD, please contact us on 0131 229 1456 or email fundraising@sightscotland.org.uk

Sight Scotland Sight Scotland is the operating name of Royal Blind. Scottish

Charity Number SC017167. Sight Scotland Veterans is the operating name of Scottish War Blinded, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number SC047192

Address: Sight Scotland, 2A Robertson Avenue, Edinburgh EH11 1PZ



Thank you for taking on Scotland's first blind yoga challenge!

Sight Scotland host first ever Blind Yoga Challenge



Last September, Sight Scotland proudly hosted Scotland's first ever Blind Yoga Challenge, a month-long online event created to promote wellbeing, raise vital funds, and support people living with vision impairment across the country.

The challenge saw 33 participants come together to take part in accessible yoga sessions, raising an impressive £1,980.

Throughout the month, participants completed a few minutes of yoga each day, following a 30-day accessible programme created by international Hatha-Vinyasa teacher Tamas Danyi-Nagy. The sessions were suitable for all abilities, including those with visual impairment, featuring clear verbal guidance and requiring no special equipment.

The challenge builds on Sight Scotland's pioneering work in delivering Scotland's only yoga classes specifically for people with vision impairment. Designed and led by Tamas, the charity's Community Activity Assistant, these in-person sessions use clear verbal guidance, seated positions, and adapted movements to make yoga safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone.

Tamas, who moved to Scotland from Hungary nine years ago and now lives in Musselburgh, explains:

“Yoga is for everyone, and I hope this challenge encourages more people to try it and experience the mental and physical benefits firsthand. Many participants in my blind yoga classes say it's the highlight of their week – often the only chance they get to go out or socialise. It rebuilds confidence, combats loneliness, and simply makes people feel better about themselves. That's why we launched this challenge. We are proud to run Scotland's only blind yoga sessions, and this is an opportunity to celebrate that and show what is possible.”

“Yoga is for everyone, and I hope this challenge encourages more people to try it and experience the mental and physical benefits firsthand.”

Fancy a challenge?

If you want to take on a challenge and fundraise for Sight Scotland, get in touch with our fundraising team today at fundraising@sightscotland.org.uk.

Jemima’s journey – independence, friends and an inspiring future

Jemima finds her superpower at the Royal Blind School



Jemima Billam, 19, loved her time at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh. It transformed her life, helping her grow in confidence, independence, and self-belief. Jemima is now embracing an exciting new chapter at the Royal National College for the Blind (RNC), the UK’s leading specialist residential college for further education for people with visual impairments.

Jemima, who has Bardet-Biedl Syndrome and Retinitis Pigmentosa, was previously isolated at mainstream school. She lacked confidence, struggled to make friends, and was struggling academically. But her life changed when she began a split placement at the Royal Blind School in 2022, eventually transitioning to full-time attendance in August 2024. For the first time, she was surrounded by teachers and classmates who truly understood her experiences and could offer the specialist support she needed to thrive.

Jemima’s parents, Jayne and Lloyd, say the difference has been remarkable.



Jayne, explains: “We have watched Jemima grow into a young woman who is ready to live independently. She has come so far. Her residential stays at the Royal Blind School, along with her growing maturity, revealed just how capable she truly is. When we visited RNC, she went straight off to chat with other students – we never thought we would see that a few years ago.

“Previously, Jemima was isolated and anxious. She struggled to get the right support in mainstream school. But everything changed when she started at the Royal Blind School. She learned independent living skills, grew socially, and discovered braille – which she calls her “superpower.” She can now read, write and express herself through poetry. Drama and mindfulness have also helped her manage her anxiety and frustration.

“The Royal Blind School has been like an extended family. The school gave Jemima independence, friends, and the ability to believe in herself. It helped her to speak up for herself. Without that, she would not be going into further education. The Royal Blind School has given her more than education – it provided her with community, belonging and trust. She found her ‘tribe’ there. Now she is ready for RNC, with the skills, friendships, and independence she has gained.

“Jemima is incredibly sad to leave the Royal Blind School, but she is excited about what is next. She is looking forward to meeting others with similar experiences, making new friends, and joining in with everything at RNC – music, quizzes, sport, tech and more. She has already been inspired by former pupils like Sam Gough, who have shown her what is possible.”



Before she left the Royal Blind School, Jemima wrote a few words describing her time there: “QTVI (Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment) teachers are gold dust. They ‘get me’ like mainstream teachers never did and give me the freedom to learn on my own and at my own speed – that makes me much more independent. I am more confident and have a future now that I never dreamed possible before the Royal Blind School.

“They taught me Braille - it is my superpower - which lets me read and write again and now I can learn and grow but just see in a different way. I wrote a poem about vision that says how I feel, and it was published. How cool is that?

“I can now use my cane to move around on my own and can talk about my feelings better because QTVI teachers understand me – I love drama and mindfulness and chilling at RBS as it makes me feel calm. All the QTVI teachers at RBS have helped me grow and I wish there were more near me and in schools and colleges. I am lucky to go to RNC to continue school, but it is so far away.

“When people ask me if I want my sight back, I say ‘NO’ because I see better now than before and I really found my tribe at the Royal Blind School.

“I will miss all at RBS, but I know that they will always be there for me – like family.”

Good luck Jemima – you will be missed!

QTVI’s building skills for life

Helping young learners grow in confidence and independence

When people think about the role of teachers, they imagine classrooms, academic subject lessons, and exams. But for children and young people with vision impairment, a Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVI) is essential. These specialists provide tailored teaching and support that not only helps learners succeed in school but also equips them with vital skills for life.

Creating a skillset for learning and living

Pam Young, a QTVI teacher at the Royal Blind School and a braille subject specialist, explains that QTVI teachers bring a disability-specific skill set that goes beyond what mainstream educators are trained to provide. Their work is not about delivering the curriculum but about enabling access to the curriculum.

Pam explains: “It’s a unique approach to learning and teaching where we have responsibility for supporting young people with sight loss to access learning. We aim to provide an appropriate learning environment with the necessary support and adjustments for all learners with sight loss, including young children and children and young people with complex additional support needs. Whether teaching braille and assistive technology or supporting early expressions of awareness and choice, we hope that, over time, our learners will acquire a bank of skills that will enable them to access the curriculum as independently as possible.

“A QTVI works closely with other professionals, such as a Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS), to ensure that learning and life skills go hand in hand. Together, they help build confidence, resilience, and autonomy.”

Filling in the gaps

“For sighted children, incidental learning leading to concept development occurs naturally through visual observation and real-life experiences. For a child with vision impairment, these everyday concepts often need to be explicitly taught. QTVI teachers step in early, sometimes from infancy, to help fill in gaps in concept development.

“Before a child can learn to read or write, they need to understand the world around them. We help them build that foundation by providing real-life experiences and access pathways that support understanding. We also support mainstream teaching colleagues who are working with young people with sight loss to develop teaching strategies and approaches that enable them to ensure these learners have equitable access to the curriculum alongside their mainstream peers.”

The role of a QTVI extends beyond the classroom; they also work with families, equipping parents with knowledge related to their child’s learning which, in turn, encourages them to feel more confident and leads to their child developing a greater sense of autonomy and independence.

“Before a child can learn to read or write, they need to understand the world around them.”



A partnership in learning

Pam and Jemima developed a strong bond during Jemima’s time at the Royal Blind School, built on Jemima’s deep commitment to learning braille and Pam’s dedication to supporting her journey.

Jemima came to braille later in her school career. She initially attended the Royal Blind School just two days a week, eventually progressing to a full-time placement with a clear goal: to regain independent access to literacy by learning to read and write braille.

“Jemima is one of the most committed braille learners I’ve taught. She had already built a

strong literacy foundation and was so focussed and determined to acquire braille as a new way to access literacy. As her braille skill set grew, so too did her confidence. Braille gave her a voice, providing her with the confidence to speak up and to advocate for herself. She took ownership of her learning, and it was a joy to witness.”

Today, braille is woven into every part of Jemima’s life, from reading and writing to aspects of independent living. Her story is a powerful example of how QTVIs do more than teach; they create opportunities, build confidence and help young people find their voice.

Did you know?

Children with vision impairment are more likely to experience social isolation making early support vital.

Lucy Edwards visits the Royal Blind School

Pupils receive inspirational visit from well-known disability advocate

Award-winning presenter, influencer and disability advocate Lucy Edwards visited the Royal Blind School earlier this year as part of her book tour, where she spoke to pupils about her debut novel, *Ella Jones vs The Sun Stealer*. Lucy lost the sight in her right eye at the age of eleven due to the genetic condition incontinentia pigmenti and later lost her remaining vision at seventeen. After deciding not to pursue law school, she trained as a journalist and in 2019 became BBC Radio 1's first blind presenter. In 2021, she was named a brand ambassador for Pantene and has already published her autobiography, *Blind Not Broken*. With millions of followers across social media, Lucy regularly shares insights into her life and experiences as a person with visual impairment.

Her visit began with an audio clip from her book, and then Lucy opened the floor to questions, engaging in a lively and wide-ranging discussion. Pupils asked about her writing process, her journey with sight loss, her work in the beauty industry, and her hopes for the future. Her openness and warmth made a lasting impression. Accompanied by her guide dog Molly, Lucy toured the school and grounds, taking time to explore the tactile signifiers placed outside each classroom. These features help pupils navigate the building independently, and Lucy was so impressed she shared them with her followers on Instagram. For the pupils at the Royal Blind School, meeting Lucy was not only inspiring, but a chance to see someone who shares their experiences thriving in the public eye.

“ We were delighted to welcome Lucy Edwards to the Royal Blind School. She is such an inspiration in the visual impairment community, and her visit made a wonderful impression on all our pupils. ”

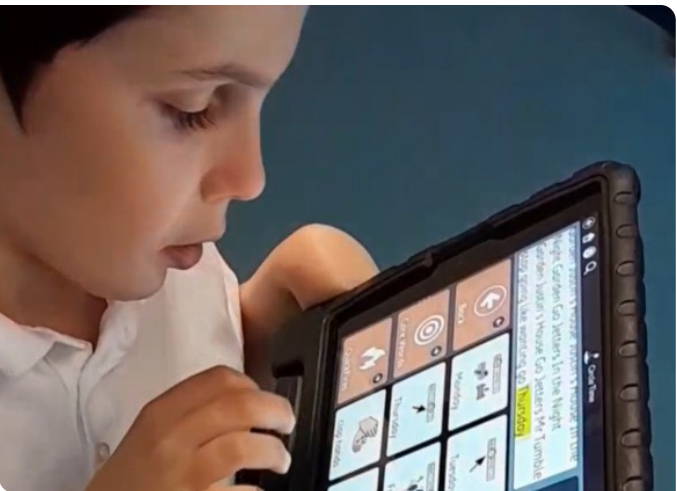
– Lucy Chetty, Head of Education at Sight Scotland



Back to school fun and learning

All our pupils at the Royal Blind School have enjoyed a busy term

Our classes at the Royal Blind School have been really busy lately. Leo has been using his TD Snap to tell everyone in his class what the day of the week is. It has been a lovely way for him to share and connect with others. Ollie and Macailean have been taking part in a fun game of skittles, showing great enthusiasm and teamwork. Over in music therapy, Findlay has been playing the guitar with Noah, filling the room with joyful sounds and smiles. It has been a fantastic to see lots of learning, laughter and creativity.



Barclays learn about banking challenges for visually impaired

Sight Scotland proud to collaborate with banking giant



Barclays staff in Glasgow recently took part in the company’s ‘Make a Difference’ event, where they explored the challenges people with visual impairments face in modern banking. Colette Walker, Co-Chair of Sight Scotland’s Policy Group, joined the session to share her personal experiences and highlight the barriers she encounters in everyday banking.

Challenges of modern banking for people with vision impairment include:

- Apps and websites often are not screen reader-friendly, have poor contrast and do not have the option to zoom.
- ATMs and card readers often lack essential audio or tactile features, while many shop terminals are difficult to reach or read - posing significant barriers to financial independence.
- Bank statements and letters are usually in standard print, with few accessible format options.
- Some people must share PINs or passwords to get help, risking privacy.
- Staff may not be trained to support visually impaired customers, and branches may not be easy to navigate.
- Features like facial recognition or budgeting apps often ignore accessibility needs.
- Use of cash is declining among retailers, which can create accessibility challenges, particularly for visually impaired individuals who may prefer cash due to its tactile nature and the presence of braille on banknotes.

Sight Scotland is proud to collaborate with forward-thinking organisations like Barclays, helping them better understand how people with visual impairments engage with their services.

Learn more!

Do you know a business that might be interested in working with Sight Scotland? Please email fundraising@sightscotland.org.uk.

Cabinet Secretary backs call for major shift in venue accessibility

Angus Robertson recently met members of our Policy Group



Scotland’s Culture Secretary Angus Robertson has backed Sight Scotland’s Accessible Venues Campaign in its mission to ensure every theatre, concert hall and cultural venue in Scotland is truly accessible for people with vision impairment.

Mr Robertson recently met with members of Sight Scotland’s Policy Group, all of whom have visual impairment, alongside representatives from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO).

The meeting highlighted that accessibility in the arts requires change across the entire process - from buying a ticket online or over the phone, to travelling to the venue, the experience during the performance, and returning home afterwards.

Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: “I was pleased to meet with Sight Scotland and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra to hear about the inspiring work already underway to help make sure that all blind and visually impaired people can enjoy Scotland’s fantastic cultural venues.

“There are lots of ways venues can make their customer journeys even more accessible. Whether on the process for booking tickets, helping people find the correct seat, buying refreshments or considerations around how to get home afterwards, small changes can make a big difference.”

Amanda Whitfield, a Sight Scotland Policy Group member from Edinburgh who was diagnosed with Stargardt disease in 2016, adds: “Since the launch of Sight Scotland’s Accessible Venues Report I have seen some improvements, but not consistently and that is the problem.

“Vision impairment is an invisible disability and too often venues simply do not realise what they should be doing. There is no single solution to accessibility, different people require different things. Tickets remain a massive problem, and this gives me huge anxiety. As everything is digital now, I am repeatedly shut out of something that should be for everyone.”

Accessible Venues Report

In 2024, Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans published the Accessible Venues Report, which revealed major barriers faced by visual impaired audiences, including inaccessible booking systems, poor communication, lack of audio descriptions or touch tours, untrained staff, and poor design features such as low colour contrast. To build on this work, Sight Scotland and Sight Loss Councils in Scotland have delivered visual impairment awareness training, including recently training more than 250 staff at the Pleasance prior to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Superstar fundraiser Aleks takes on fourth Kiltwalk for Sight Scotland

Young fundraiser inspired by his dad



Young superstar fundraiser, Aleks Crosby, recently took on his fourth Kiltwalk in aid of Sight Scotland, a charity he has grown up around through his dad's work as a Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer.

This year Aleks was joined on the Edinburgh Wee Wander by his dad, Kieran, his two-year-old brother Daniel, and his auntie Naomi.

Aleks, from Edinburgh, who loves wearing his "Superstar Fundraiser" badge, said: "I love fundraising. This was my fourth Kiltwalk and I loved it. It feels amazing knowing that by walking I'm helping to raise money and awareness for such an important cause.

"I am very proud of what my dad does – he helps people every day – and if I can do my wee bit to help too, then that makes me happy. Walking five miles is just one day for me, but it can make a difference for people living with visual impairment every single day."

Kieran works as a Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer with Sight Scotland, supporting people with visual impairment to regain their independence and confidence.

He comments: "I love my job, and Aleks has grown up around Sight Scotland. He has always been fascinated by what we do and how we



“ Walking five miles is just one day for me, but it can make a difference for people living with visual impairment every single day. ”

help people. He asks about the technology we use, whether it is a talking microwave or a liquid level indicator that helps someone make a cup of tea safely, and he has always been incredibly supportive.

"Sight loss can take away a person's confidence and leave them feeling lonely or isolated, but it does not have to be like this. With the right support, people with visual impairment can achieve so much. They can live full and independent lives, rebuild their confidence, and take part in the things that matter most to them."

A big thank you to our Kiltwalk heroes

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who walked for Sight Scotland in the 2025 Kiltwalks across the country.

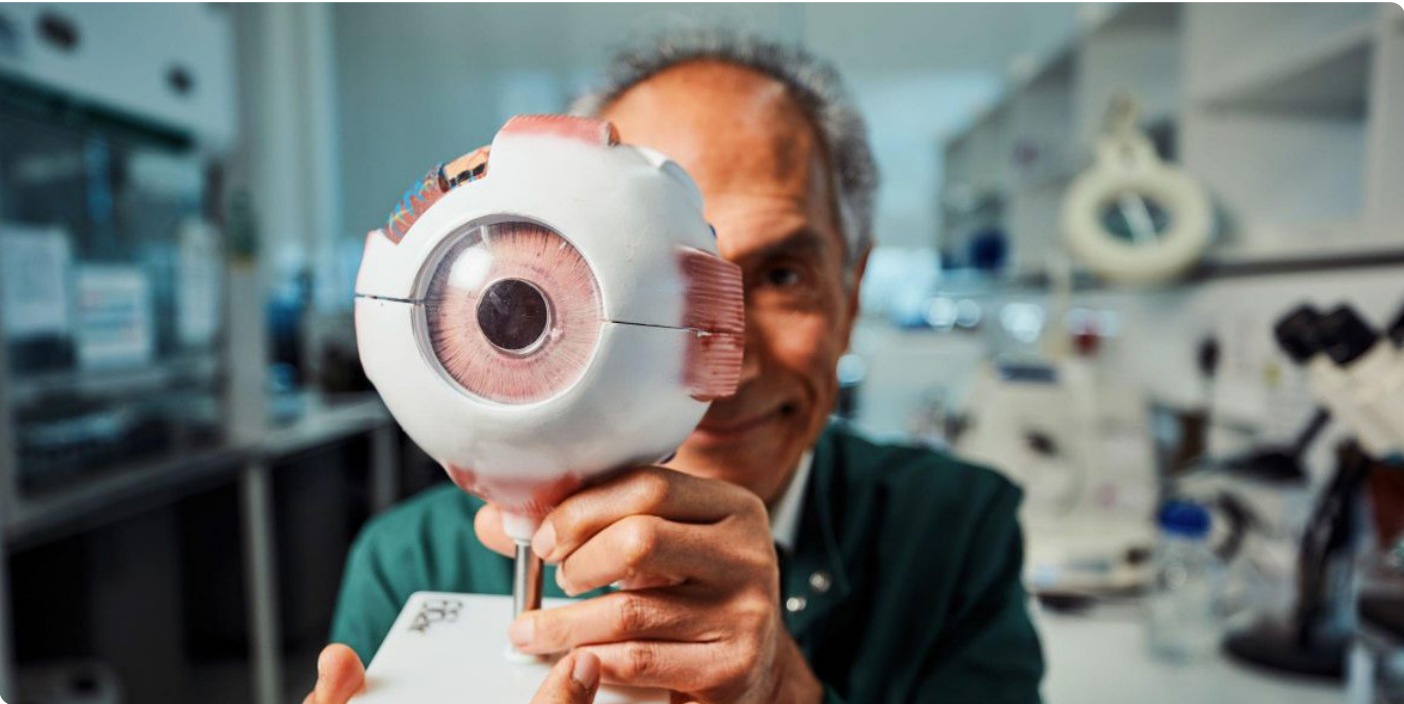
Whether you joined us in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, or Edinburgh, your support means the world. Every mile you walked and every penny you raised helps us support people living with visual impairment in Scotland.



Sign up today to take part in a Kiltwalk for Sight Scotland, contact us at fundraising@sightscotland.org.uk.

Scottish universities reach retinal imaging milestone

Sight Scotland-backed project secures over a million retinal scans



A groundbreaking Scottish research project, backed by Sight Scotland, has reached a major milestone - securing over one million retinal images to advance eye health.

Launched in 2020 by the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow Caledonian University, the Scottish Collaborative Optometry-Ophthalmology Network eResearch (SCONe), the project allows researchers to discover new information about eye and general diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

Over the past five years, the SCONe resource has successfully grown from an initial proof of concept to a world-leading project, having now safely delivered over 1 million retinal images from optometry practices around Scotland to Public Health Scotland’s National Safe Haven, a secure data environment for clinical research.

By safeguarding retinal images from community optometry practices across Scotland, SCONe is helping researchers and clinicians detect diseases earlier and improve public health outcomes.

Did you know?

NHS Scotland offers free eye tests to everyone, regardless of age or income making early detection more accessible than in many other parts of the UK.

Mapping the future of visual impairment support in Scotland

Real progress starts with collaboration and listening.



Vision Collaborative Scotland has relaunched with a fresh purpose and a shared ambition to improve life for people living with visual impairment across the country.

The group recognises the many challenges that people with visual impairment face, from limited access to support to a shortage of trained rehabilitation professionals. By bringing together organisations from across the sector, Vision Collaborative Scotland aims to strengthen voices, set shared priorities, and work together on lasting solutions that truly make a difference.

Susan Shippey, Chair of Vision Collaborative Scotland and Head of Strategic Partnerships at Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, explains: “Real progress starts with collaboration and listening. We want to make sure that people with visual impairment are at the heart of shaping the services they rely on.

“We learned from people with lived experience that services vary widely across the country, so one of our first projects is A Clearer Picture: Mapping Adult Vision Impairment Support in Scotland. This new review will help show where services are, what support is available, and how things can be improved. This work is being led by Birch Tree Associates with results expected in spring 2026.

“Workforce sustainability is another critical priority. There is an urgent need to train and retain professionals in vision rehabilitation.

“That is why we are working with the University of Strathclyde to launch a new training programme for rehabilitation specialists in January 2026. The courses will include a one-year postgraduate certificate and a two-year postgraduate diploma, creating accessible routes into the profession. Thanks to support from the RS Macdonald Charitable Trust, sponsorships will be available to help people already working in the Scottish visual impairment charity and public sector access the course.”

Vision Collaborative Scotland

Vision Collaborative Scotland brings together many well-known visual impairment organisations, including Sight Scotland, Sight Scotland Veterans, Guide Dogs, Visibility Scotland, RNIB Scotland, the Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network, the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, Thomas Pocklington Trust, and Visionary.

Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans have played a key role in supporting Vision Collaborative Scotland by funding a dedicated post, contributing to research, and offering inclusive leadership. The aim is to encourage collaboration, harnessing members’ collective strength to tackle the complex issues facing blind and vision impaired people today.

For more information on Vision Collaborative Scotland please visit sightscotland.org.uk/vision-collaborative-scotland

Mhairi and Nate loving Play and Connect

Early intervention is vital for young children with visual impairment



Mhairi Murning and her son Nate are absolutely loving Sight Scotland’s Play and Connect sessions in Glasgow.

Nate, aged 3, has a visual impairment caused by complications related to his premature birth. He has an identical twin who does not have vision impairment.

Mhairi, from Helensburgh, shares: “Play and Connect has helped Nate so much, it genuinely is the best thing we’ve been to. It’s had a massive impact on his development, interaction, and confidence.

“The Clowndoctors are amazing, and they’ve really taken the time to get to know him, understand what he responds to, and what he enjoys. The support from the visually impaired specialists and habilitation experts has also been incredible, helping to tailor the sessions to Nate’s needs and giving us great advice to use at home. We both just love the sessions, you

can see that there’s a real connection, and it’s a space where Nate can simply have fun in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

Mhairi adds: “The sessions also provide brilliant support and feedback for parents, which is just so important. Development is so crucial at an early age, and children with vision impairments obviously learn and explore in different ways, so to have a service like this is just invaluable.”

Play and Connect

Play and Connect brings together the specialist skills of teachers for visually impaired children (QTVIs) and habilitation experts with the playful, therapeutic approach of Hearts and Minds’ Clowndoctors. This unique blend creates a safe, inclusive, and fun space for sensory-based play. Through rhythm, music, storytelling, and sound, the sessions help children build confidence in communication, movement, and interaction. Just as importantly, they offer families a chance to connect, share experiences, and pick up helpful ideas to support their child’s development at home.



Ben joins BBC’s ‘Breaking the News’ audience

Lights, camera, excitement! Residential pupil’s amazing TV experience



Ben Wilson, a Sight Scotland residential service user, recently had the exciting opportunity to attend a live recording of BBC Scotland’s hit panel show ‘Breaking the News’. The episode featured none other than visually impaired comedian Jamie MacDonald, a familiar face to many who work at Sight Scotland after his inspiring appearance at our Connect event last year.



Did you know?

In Scotland, you can upgrade your standard NHS eye test to include advanced imaging, such as retinal scans, for a small additional fee.

True inclusion for the visual impaired starts with attitudes, not architecture

By Callum Lancashire, Engagement Manager for Sight Loss Councils in Scotland



When people talk about accessibility, they often think about the physical changes that make places easier to navigate, such as ramps, lifts, wider doorways, or clearer signs. These are vital, of course, but if we stop there, we miss half the picture. True inclusion is not just about changing buildings; it is about changing minds.

Many people still see visual impairment as a problem with the person. The medical model treats it that way. But the social model shows the real challenge comes from the barriers around us – in buildings, street design, online, or in people’s attitudes. Even the most accessible location will fall short if staff do not know how to guide someone safely, or if vision impairment is seen as a limitation rather than part of human diversity.

As Engagement Manager for Sight Loss Councils in Scotland, I see every day how much attitudes matter. I also know this personally. I lost my sight at fifteen after an accident caused macular degeneration. At the time, I had no support and no one to guide me through the changes in my life. My mental health suffered. It was only when I met others with vision impairment and shared experiences that I realised I could still live a full and active life. What I needed was not pity but understanding.

That understanding is exactly what Sight Loss Councils aim to create. We meet monthly, bringing together visual impaired volunteers to influence change locally and nationally. We use our lived experience to champion the rights of people with visual impairment and push for greater accessibility, inclusion and



equality. Currently active in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dumfries and Galloway, our councils are delivered in partnership by Sight Scotland, Sight Scotland Veterans and Visibility Scotland, with funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust.

Changing attitudes is at the heart of the work we do at the Sight Loss Councils, where we support members to navigate daily barriers and speak up for the changes they need. Sight Loss Councils have been proud to support the success of Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans’ Fair Rail Campaign, which directly led to the launch of a Scotland-wide pilot scheme giving free rail travel to companions of blind and partially sighted passengers. From April 2025, anyone with an Eye Plus One Scottish National Entitlement Card can travel with a companion at no extra cost.

The Fair Rail Campaign highlights why understanding and supporting the needs of people with visual impairment is just as important as the infrastructure in place. Even the most accessible train station in the world can be a major hurdle for someone with visual impairment. Getting on a train safely requires self-confidence, planning, and support - and until recently, this support was inconsistent and costly.

The new pilot scheme is a clear example of what can happen when attitudes change at every level. Inclusion is not about doing something extra for disabled people, it is about removing unnecessary barriers so that everyone can take part in everyday life.

Sight Loss Councils launch in Dumfries and Galloway

A new Sight Loss Council has launched in Dumfries and Galloway, offering a unique opportunity for local people with visual impairment to have their voices heard.

Sight Loss Councils are made up of visually impaired volunteers who use their own experiences to address local and national issues, promote accessibility, and make the community more inclusive.

For more information about how to get involved with the Sight Loss Councils please call 0800 024 8973 or email callum.lancashire@sightscotland.org.uk

Ready to make a real impact in 2026?

Could you take on a challenge to help people with visual impairment in Scotland?

Our work supporting people living with visual impairment in Scotland is only possible thanks to the incredible generosity of our fundraisers and donors. If you are looking for a fun way to give back and make a difference then 2026 is your year!

We've got an exciting line-up of events throughout 2026 with options suitable for every age and ability, so get signed up today:

“ If you are looking for a fun way to give back and make a real difference then 2026 is your year! ”

Kiltwalk 2026 – April to September

Scotland's biggest fundraising event is back for another year of Kiltwalks across the country. Whether you're taking on the Wee Wander, Big Stroll or Mighty Stride, there's a Kiltwalk that you can do coming to a city near you in 2026! We are also making discount codes available to our fundraisers, so if you'd like to give fundraising a shot it has never been easier:

- Glasgow – 25-26 April
- Aberdeen – 7 June
- Dundee – 16 August
- Edinburgh – 13 September

SuperNova Kelpies - 13th and 14th March 2026

This night-time 5K is the perfect beginners' option to get moving, start fundraising and have a scenic night out at one of Scotland's iconic locations. Get your running gear on and bring your glowsticks for a family friendly night of illuminations - this event would be great for a team of any ability!



Kilomathon Scotland 2026 Cycling Challenge - Sunday 29th March

Maybe you're more of a cyclist than a runner? Why not take part in the Kilomathon Scotland 2026 event in Edinburgh and get the wheels spinning for a cause that matters:

- 13.1k Kilomathon – for the more experienced cyclists
- 6.5k Kilomathon – great for beginners and enthusiasts
- 2.62k Kilomathon – fun for all ages and abilities



Edinburgh Marathon Festival – 23rd and 24th May 2026

Join Scotland's premier running festival on 23rd and 24th May 2026. From the full marathon and half marathon to the 10k, 5k, and junior events, there's something for every runner in your family. Don't delay - marathon and half marathon entries close 31st January, so register soon!

- EMF Marathon and ½ Marathon
- Hairy Haggis Relay
- EMF 10k and 5K
- EMF junior (5k, 2.5k, 1.5k and 1k)



Our dedicated fundraising team are on stand-by to support you from sign-up to finish line, so if you're ready to become a fantastic fundraiser in 2026, reach out today! For more information visit sightscotland.org.uk/fundraise or email sam.smith@sightscotland.org.uk.

Sight Scotland helps Omer rebuild his life

Rehabilitation is key after a visual impairment diagnosis



Omer, 62, originally from Sudan, has called Edinburgh home since 1992, when he arrived to study Business Studies.

Omer first noticed changes in his vision around 15 years ago, and at the time, he found it incredibly difficult to cope. Forced to give up work and unable to enjoy the activities he once loved, life became a struggle, until a referral to Sight Scotland marked the beginning of a new chapter.

He explains: “I began noticing changes in my vision around 15 years ago. At first, it was subtle, I realised I wasn’t seeing the full television screen and started struggling to read. After seeking medical advice, I was diagnosed with glaucoma. That diagnosis changed everything.

“I had been working as an area supervisor for a security company, but my eyesight got so bad that I had to give up work. That was the start of a really difficult time. Losing my job was just one part of it. I could no longer do the things I loved, like cooking or reading... it all became overwhelming.

“The hardest part was facing my new reality; I had to accept that this is how it is for me now. The emotional impact of losing my sight was so difficult and I really struggled to come to terms with what was happening to me. I felt isolated, frustrated, and my mental health took a real hit. The stress also started affecting my physical health, and my blood pressure went up, I just wasn’t myself. I was under so much stress because of my vision loss, I was lost and didn’t know what to do.”

He continues: “Things started to change when I was referred to Sight Scotland’s Rehabilitation and Mobility Service through the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion. They gave me practical help and emotional support that completely changed my daily life.

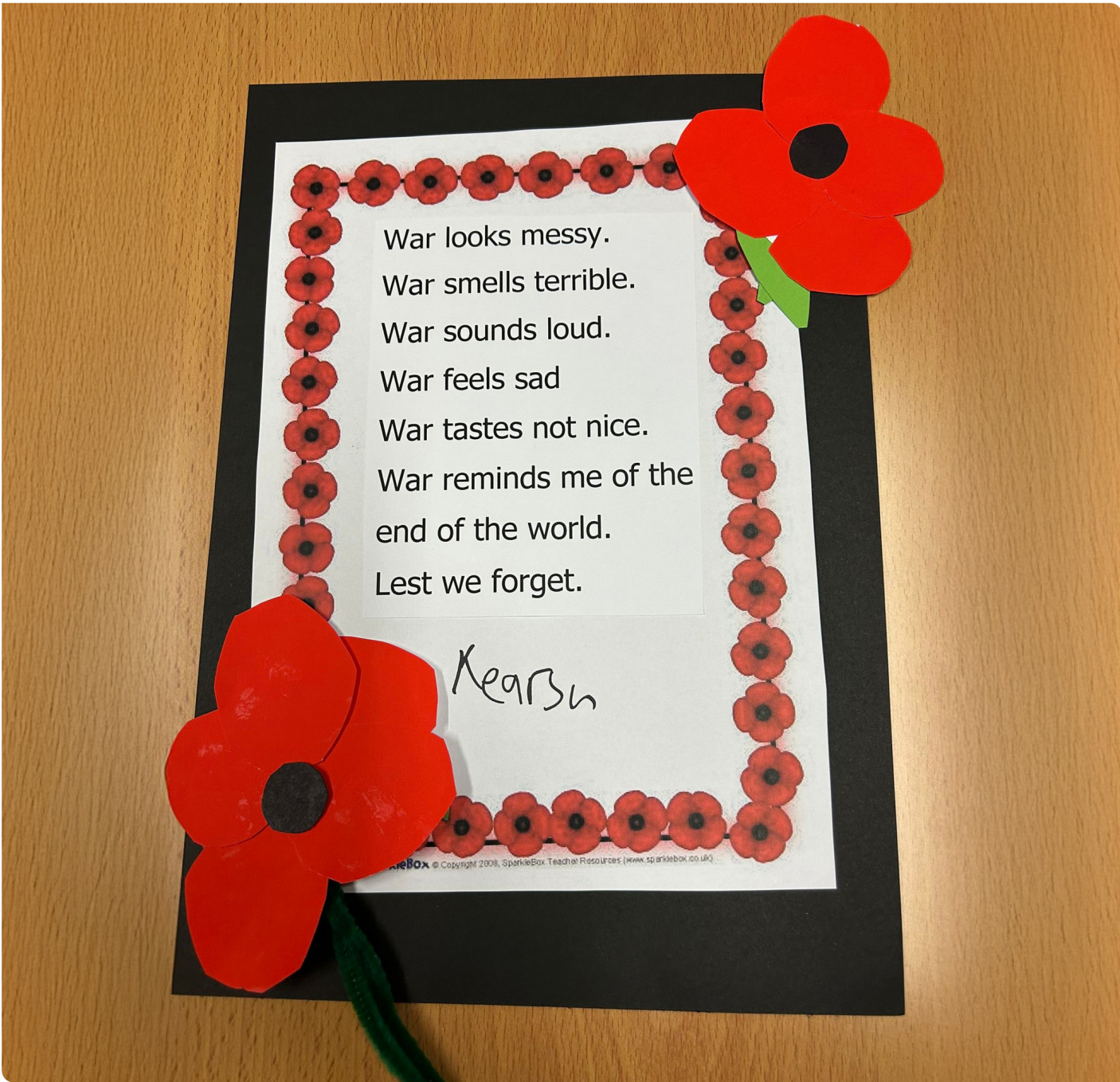
“Sight Scotland provided me with a tablet which made it much easier to connect to the internet, they helped me get grants for a talking kitchen and medical equipment, and I was able to start cooking again - something I truly love. But more than anything, what helped me the most was feeling that Sight Scotland genuinely cares about how I’m managing and how they can help. That emotional support is so important.”

Caroline Hedley, a Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer at Sight Scotland who has worked closely with Omer, says “Omer’s journey reflects what many people with visual impairment go through. It’s about more than just mobility or equipment; it’s about helping someone rebuild confidence, find purpose, and reconnect with the things that make life meaningful. We’ve worked together to find practical solutions, but the emotional reassurance - knowing you’re not alone - can make all the difference.”

If you or someone you know is affected by visual impairment and needs advice, support, or a listening ear, please call Sight Scotland’s helpline on 0800 024 8973.

A Heartfelt Tribute for Remembrance Day

Royal Blind School pupils create important reminder



Royal Blind School student Kearyn has written a heartfelt poem during his English lessons to mark Remembrance Day. His words capture the importance of honoring those who served and sacrificed.

The striking poppies were carefully crafted by Kearyn and Adrianna in their Social Subjects lesson.

We are proud of our talented pupils for creating such a meaningful way to reflect and remember.

Sight Scotland lottery

For just £1 per week, be in with the chance of winning amazing cash prizes up to £25,000!



Match 6
numbers to win
£25,000



Match 5
numbers to win
£1,000



Match 4
numbers to win
£25

By playing our weekly lottery, you'll be helping us to support people of all ages throughout Scotland who are struggling with the impact of sight loss.

For just £1 per entry you could be in with a chance to win £25,000!

The draw takes place weekly, and it is super easy to sign up.

Visit sightscotland.org.uk/lottery to play our lottery