

MySight York

Annual Report 2022/23



One of our award winning sensory storytelling sessions

MySight York
live well with sight loss

Reg. Charity No: 1159188

R N I B
Visibly Better
Employer


Visionary
Winner 2023

 **COMMUNITY**
FUND

Contents

3 Our Year in Review from Scott Jobson, Chief Executive

4 Equipment and Information Service

6 Eye Clinic Liaison Service

7 Counselling and Employment Service

8 Groups and Activities

10 Volunteering

11 Befriending

12 Communication and Transcription

14 Finance

16 Thank You

14 Merchants Place

Merchantgate

York, YO1 9TU

Tel. 01904 636269

Email: hello@mysightyork.org

Website: www.mysightyork.org

Editor: Barbara Fairs

Our Year in Review

By Scott Jobson, Chief Executive

I am pleased to present the MySight York Annual Report for the year 2022-2023. This report encapsulates our organisation's journey, achievements, and impact as we continue to be a beacon of support for people with visual impairments in the York community.

At MySight York, our mission remains unwavering: to enhance the quality of life of people living with sight loss. This year, we upheld this commitment through a multitude of programs, services, and initiatives that have positively touched the lives of many.

Financial sustainability is crucial for achieving our mission, and this proves to be our key challenge. We continued to deliver high-quality services and expanded our reach to unprecedented levels, serving many more individuals in need of our support.

Our focus on providing client centred services has been at the forefront of our efforts. We have continued to offer a wide range of services, from peer support and counselling to an expert equipment and information service.

We also offer an essential support service at York Hospital Eye Clinic via our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer,

to anyone experiencing difficulties with a change in vision. In addition, we delivered visual impairment awareness training, a transcription service, living well with sight loss courses, assistive technology support groups, a city-wide befriending service and county-wide specialist employment advice.

Our services continued to evolve to meet the needs of our members, providing remote support and virtual events to ensure that no one feels isolated.

As we look to the future, MySight York is committed to reaching as many blind and partially sighted people in York as possible, and foster inclusivity in all aspects of our work. We will continue to collaborate with partners, volunteers, and the wider community to achieve our mission.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and partners who have played an integral role in making our vision a reality. Together, we are making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and we look forward to another year of progress and positive impact. (Scott)

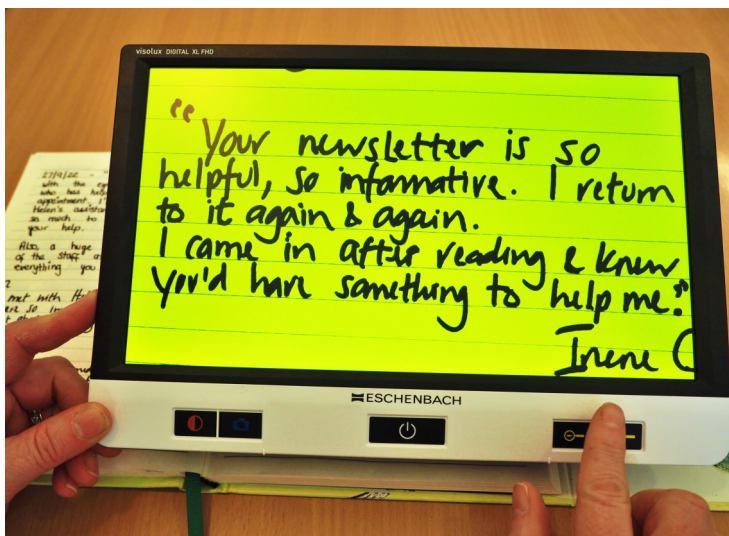
Equipment and Information Service

Our equipment and Information service is at the heart of everything we do to facilitate accessibility and empowerment for blind and partially sighted people, allowing them to make best use of the sight they have and to live well with sight loss.

Our fully qualified Eye Care Liaison Officer provides one to one, individually tailored support and advice to enable visually impaired people to overcome barriers and enhance their independence and quality of life.

Visitors to our equipment centre can try a wide variety of aids to ensure they find the right fit for them.

There is everything from assistive technology in the forms of magnifiers, screen readers, large buttoned phones and audio books, to talking clocks and watches, lighting, kitchen equipment, large print diaries and calendars and so much more. Each session is tailored to help the client perform daily living tasks and maintain their independence.



Electronic magnifiers, lighting and large print diaries and calendars are some of the many items to explore in the Equipment & Information centre



Our E&I Centre is open to anyone who is struggling with their sight or friends, relatives or carers of visually impaired people.

Between April 2022 and March 2023 there were over **2,000** visits to the Equipment and Information Centre:

- **875** unique beneficiaries attended the E&I
- **114** items were delivered to clients' homes


We offer face to face or telephone appointments within our equipment centre but there are occasions when clients are unable to visit us. During the pandemic we created our Home Connections service

where items of equipment could be delivered to the client's door by a volunteer, allowing them to try it out in their home environment to ensure it works for them.

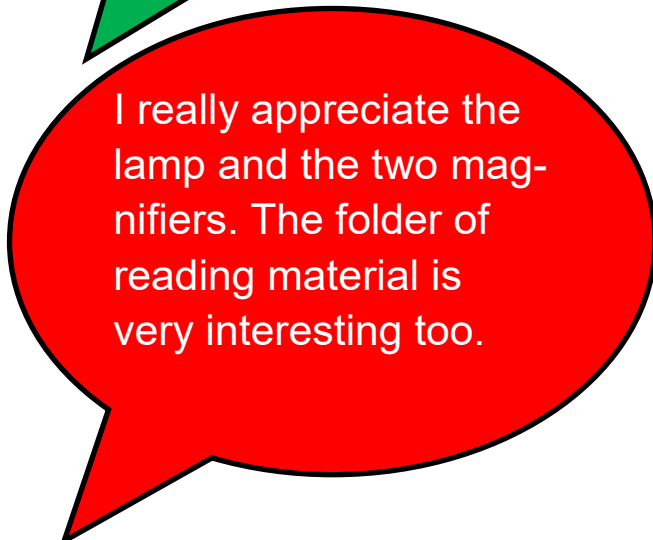
This unique service ensures that visually impaired people have access to equipment and advice that will help them to access information, perform daily living tasks and stay connected with friends and family whilst maintaining their independence. This person centred approach allows each individual to achieve their own best outcome.

Funding from Trusts has enabled us to provide over £23,000 of equipment to date.


What do our clients say about our service?




I thought my reading days were over but you've shown me ways to continue



I really appreciate the lamp and the two magnifiers. The folder of reading material is very interesting too.



Thank you for transforming the way I manage. It is wonderful the difference I have experienced



I have seen things I haven't been able to see anywhere else and I wanted to experience them for myself

Eye Clinic Liaison Service

Our professional Eye Clinic Liaison Officer continues to provide support and assistance to individuals with sight loss in York Hospital's Eye Clinic.

The ECLO plays a crucial role in helping patients to navigate the healthcare system, understand their eye conditions and access services and support.

This non-medical role allows patients the time and space to discuss their diagnosis and explore the help and support that is available to them, not only within the hospital but also in their local community.

The role is more important than ever as the number of people needing to access the service continues to grow.

The ECLO provides support with:

- Understanding the diagnosis
- Managing the emotional impact of sight loss
- Certification and registration
- Confidence and independence
- Daily tasks
- Getting about safely

And has dealt with:

- **566** individual patients
- **1,500** overall contacts
- **174** Certificates of Vision Impairment
- **668** onward referrals to support organisations

What patients have to say:

Thank you, this has been brilliant. It is the first time anyone has talked to me about how I am feeling and the emotional impact. Just giving me time to think about my sight and being able to articulate how it affects me has been so helpful.

The whole appointment has been very informative, we are new to this and were hoping you could give us some information, which you have.

Thank you Helen for taking the time to listen to me today...

Counselling and Employment Support

After a pause to the service during the pandemic, we were delighted to be able to recommence our counselling service, Talking Space.

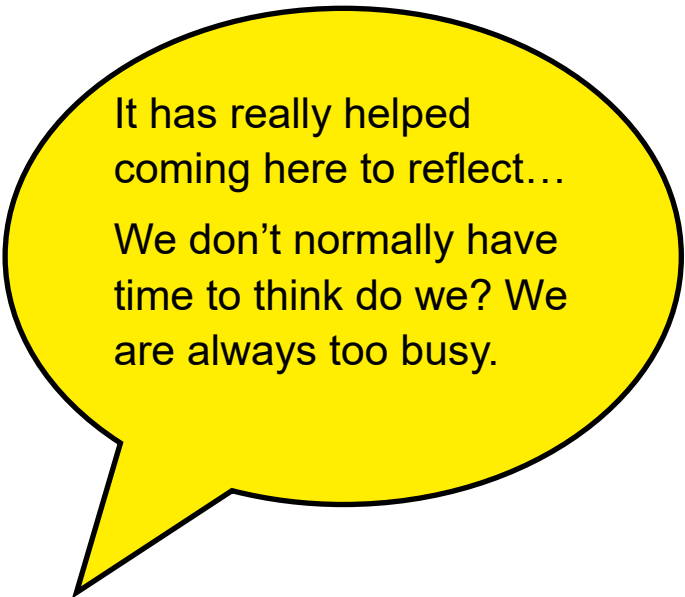
This is a free service designed for people with sight loss or their family and friends.

Talking Space offers one to one counselling to enable people to explore a range of issues regarding sight loss and to help provide coping strategies, emotional support and a safe place to express their feelings and concerns.

The counselling on offer is person centred so all the work is led by the client and explores any issues they wish to discuss, taking place in a safe environment with Counsellors

who have been trained in sight loss awareness.

We were able to recommence the service with two Counsellors initially but we hope to double this by the end of the year to meet the ever rising demand from our clients.



It has really helped coming here to reflect... We don't normally have time to think do we? We are always too busy.

With funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust, our new Employment Advice Service will deliver the Works For Me programme across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We are immensely proud to be chosen as one of only two pilot projects in the country for this innovative scheme.

This free service aims to help blind and partially sighted people who are looking for paid employment, seeking

training or education to lead them to employment or navigating a career change.

The service can support visually impaired people to identify a career that is right for them, support them in practical ways such as reviewing a CV or help with interview practice. We can then put an action plan in place to develop skills and confidence and support applicants through the whole job application process.

Groups and Activities

Our range of regular groups, training sessions, workshops, social events and peer support groups foster a sense of community and give people the chance to share ideas, learn new skills and make friends. They can also provide emotional support for people living with sight loss.

Our groups and activities are hugely popular with:

- **1,590** attendances at our groups
- **287** groups held
- **443** clients attending

Groups include:

- Exercise class
- Audio book group
- Discussion group
- Technology support group
- 121 Tech support
- Access group
- A support group for people who experience visual hallucinations
- Quiz group
- Piano tuition
- Support with MySight (3 groups)
- Boccia
- Tennis
- Board Games
- Knit and Natter
- Chair exercise
- Walking group
- One-off event groups

The groups run in a variety of ways to ensure as many people as possible can access them. Some groups are face to face, some by telephone or Zoom and others are a mix of virtual and in person. Our wonderful volunteers help us to run many of these groups, providing friendship and support to those taking part.



Our audio Book Group allows people who find it difficult to read print to enjoy listening to, talking about and sharing books once a month.



Our Exercise Group provides fun and fitness for all ages.

As well as regular groups we run one-off workshops or events, often in collaboration with our partners.

Along with York Sight Loss Council and Wilberforce Trust, we ran a “Let’s Get Active” Day at a local leisure centre where blind and partially sighted people could have taster sessions of a range of sports and activities.

As a result of the interest in this event we were able to set up our weekly VI Tennis club and a Tai Chi class for our members.



MySight York organised a trip out...I have never felt so relaxed as I did for a long time, we had a truly wonderful time.

Our collaboration with York Bike Belles allowed us to take our members on some wonderful walking tours in the local area which were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who took part.

With funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust, our Play My Way project ran a series of sensory storytelling sessions and created sensory “story sacks” in collaboration with York Explore and Toy Like Me.

Each story sack was created to enhance one of the books being used in the sensory storytelling session with “props” such as fake grass, water, sand and in one case, a bucketful of dinosaurs!

These sacks are now available through Explore York and the York Specialist Teaching Team for families with visually impaired to borrow, with handy tips for sensory play.

We are delighted to say that this innovative project has now won the new Visionary UK Children and Young People Award sponsored by the Powell Family Foundation .



Playing in the “snow” at one of the sensory storytelling sessions.

Volunteering

Volunteers are a vital part of everything we do at MySight York.

From supporting our activity groups, providing one to one befriending friendship to helping us raise funds to ensure we can provide our services or sitting on the Executive Committee as a Trustee of the charity, volunteers are hugely important to our work.



A volunteer supporting a member at an IT training session

Our volunteers receive ongoing support and training including Sight Loss Awareness Training and Safeguarding sessions to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively carry out their roles.

Volunteers can choose to give their time on a regular basis, such as weekly activity support or befriending sessions, or they can provide ad hoc help for one-off events such as a fundraising activity. We are immensely grateful to all of our wonderful volunteers.

I have enjoyed working as a volunteer and it has been a privilege to be part of such a great organisation

The role has been very rewarding. I made friendships that I will remember fondly for the rest of my life

Our Home Visiting volunteers very often say they get as much benefit from the scheme as the clients they are visiting



Befriending

Our Befriending service runs in two ways—face to face and by telephone.

This service provides a crucial support system that enhances social connections, emotional wellbeing and quality of life. These connections can often lead to enduring friendships between the client and volunteer, benefitting and empowering both.

In this last year we have invested in new telephone software to make our befriending calls easier, safer and more accessible for people with sight loss and the volunteers who support them.



I really enjoy my chats with my volunteer, I look forward to each one.

In the last year:

- **44** clients have received regular contact via the befriending service
- **1,172** hours of befriending phone calls were made
- **814** calls were made
- **346** Home Visiting visits were completed by volunteers
- **32** dedicated volunteers took part in the befriending service

My visits are brilliant, my volunteer has made a lot of difference. She reads books to me, I get to read books that I wouldn't have done and she makes them very interesting



Communication and Transcription


Our quarterly newsletter continues to be our number one platform to provide accessible and relevant information to our clients, their families, our volunteers and to local organisations.

We currently send out over 1,600 newsletters in total and clients opt to receive their newsletter in the following ways:

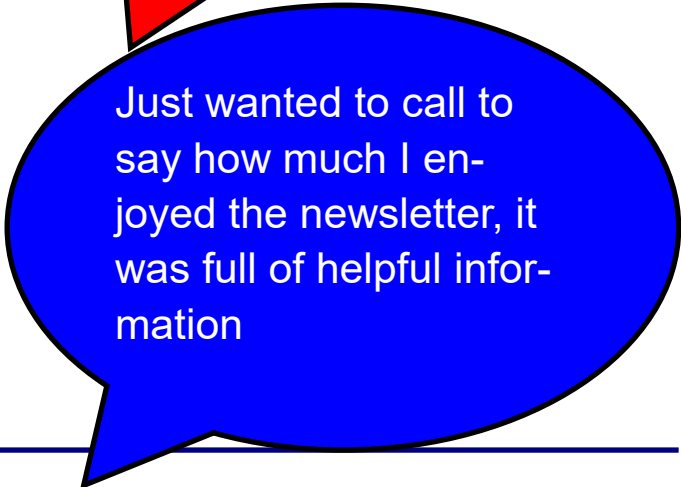
- **4,192** in large print
- **788** by email in a screen reader accessible document
- **220** by CD
- **176** in MP3 format
- **20** in Braille

We have also continued to grow our online presence with over 1,800 followers on Facebook and Twitter and have increased our reach by adding an additional 276 followers among businesses and organisations on LinkedIn.

Our website is regularly updated and refreshed with our newsletter not only being available to download but the audio tracks are also available to listen to online. We hope to increase this reach even further by making our newsletter available to listen to via Amazon Alexa in the near future.



Amazing, informative newsletter. Thank you to everyone.



Just wanted to call to say how much I enjoyed the newsletter, it was full of helpful information

As part of our commitment to helping local health services to meet the Accessible Health Standard we provide a transcription service, principally used by York and Scarborough NHS Trust.

This allows anyone using the hospital services to request information is sent to them in a format they can read themselves, to ensure confidentiality for patients.

We have also assisted local businesses and educational establishments to create accessible documents, such as large print and Braille menus for restaurants and Braille transcription for local tourist attractions to make them more accessible for visually impaired visitors. We work with the University of York to make accessible documents for visually impaired students.

Finance—Income

As at 31 March 2023	2022/2023	2021/2022
Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group	£23,470	£23,078
Lottery Project	£25,300	£98,071
York Hospital (ECLO)	£25,832	£24,975
Postcode Lottery	£20,700	£0
TPT Project	£24,787	£0
Donations and Gift Aid	£73,589	£86,908
Legacies	£70,043	£34,196
Community Fundraising	£3,138	£2,518
Income for Work	£5,694	£4,100
Sales of equipment and aids	£10,853	£12,256
Social and Group Activities	£882	£132
Sundry Income	£799	£150
Bank Interest	£227	£89
Total Income	£285,314	£287,703

Finance—Expenditure

As at 31 March 2023	2022/2023	2021/2022
Salaries	£218,366	£203,397
Rent, rates, Service Charge	£58,700	£45,845
Cost of equipment sold	£6,738	£11,446
Professional Fees	£11,061	£5,724
Independent Examination	£2,200	£4,000
Lottery Funding Overheads		
And Outreach	£27,292	£11,0177
Printed Material	£403	£1,109
Lottery funding Equipment	£6,074	£473
Staff IT	£3,975	£1,442
Insurance	£1,520	£1,445
Consultancy	£2,412	£1,479
Maintenance	£1,930	£4,729
Stationery and Photocopying	£1,054	£1,160
Sundry Expenses	£1,966	£1,120
Postage	£1,304	£990
Bank Charges	£914	£928
Newsletter	£2,831	£3,896
Phone	£2,707	£1,093
All Aboard Planning	£462	£3,018
Social Activities	£182	£0
TPT Funding Overheads	£11,420	£0
Expenditure on raising funds	£4,251	£14,286
Other costs	£17,321	£6,518
Total Expenditure	£385,083	£326,247

Finance—Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Stock	£9,456	£6,316
Debtors	£46,360	£31,818
Cash in bank and in hand	£131,309	£246,731
Total	£187,125	£284,865
Liabilities: Amounts due within one year		
Creditors and Accruals	£(33,671)	£(31,642)
Net Current Assets	£153,454	£253,223
Net Current Assets Less		
Current Liabilities	£153,454	£253,223
Represented By:		
Funds		
Unrestricted	£34,105	£40,952
Designated Building Fund	£65,000	£165,000
Restricted	£54,349	£47,271
Total	£153,454	£253,223

The full accounts for the year to March 2023 have been independently examined by Azets are available on the Charity's website www.mysightyork.org

Thank You

The cost of living crisis and financial challenges are being felt by everyone and charities are no exception.

This makes the support of donors, trusts, health services and the National Lottery more important than ever.

We are extremely grateful to the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (now the Integrated Care Board) and York and Scarborough Teaching Hospital NHS Trust for their financial support.

The National Lottery provided continuation support in the last 12 months and are also funding a new Community Connectors project starting in April 2023.

Thomas Pocklington Trust has generously supported our Play My Way and Works For Me projects as well as funding an internship placement.

Thanks also go to:

The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust
Charity of Jane Wright
The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
The Postcode Lottery

The Rotary Club of York
Newton on Derwent Methodist Church
City of York Council
Truemark Trust
Douglas Arter Foundation
Westfield Health
The W.O. Street Charitable Foundation
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
Souter Charitable Trust
Sylvia and Colin Shepherd Charitable Trust
A.M Fenton Trust
Charles Brotherton Trust
Feeofees of St Michael Spurriergate
The 3 Rs
York racecourse
The ASDA Foundation
W.L. Pratt Charitable Trust
The Hobson Charity
The Jack Brunton Charitable Trust
Probus Group

Most of all we want to say a huge thank you to all of those individuals who make regular donations or give a one-off amount, your support means the world to us. We are also extremely grateful to those who choose to leave a legacy in their wills, these gifts have been hugely important to us over recent years and we can't thank those who do so and their families enough.