

## **New ‘vision’ and identity for flourishing partnership of sight loss charities**

The collective partnership of eight of the leading charities in the sight loss sector, known for the last three years as the VI Charity Sector Partnership, has re-launched under a new identity of the ‘Vision Partnership’ with a re-invigorated purpose and new strategic focus.

In 2020, the COVID-19 crisis resulted in the sight loss sector rallying together to address the challenges being faced by blind and partially sighted people at that unprecedented time. The organisations collaborated on pressing issues such as access to food, social isolation, accessible health information and social distancing. This demonstrated the added value and benefits of working together and resulted in a renewed spirit to collaborate.

A partnership was established in October 2020 comprising of: Blind Veterans UK, Glaucoma UK, Guide Dogs, Macular Society, Retina UK, RNIB, Thomas Pocklington Trust and Visionary, which is the membership organisation of over 110 local sight loss charities across the UK. The partnership operates in an informal way and, by not having a formal structure, means that the charities benefit from working in partnership with other like-minded organisations, while also giving each charity the autonomy to work independently to benefit their own supporters and service-users. The partner organisations do vary in size but they all make valuable contributions to the joint work.

Matt Stringer, Chair of the Vision Partnership, and RNIB’s CEO, said: “Trust and strong working relationships have been built and a significant amount of collaborative impact has been achieved to date, such as the Eye Care Support Pathway and VI Insight Hub. However, after three years we felt it was time to undertake a review of our purpose, strategic focuses and ensure the partnership is fit for future collaboration. The review demonstrated a strong commitment to continue the partnership and to focus our purpose on the big issues that improve the lives of people with sight loss and those at risk of developing sight loss, under the new identity of the ‘Vision Partnership’.”

Moving forward the strategic focus of the Vision Partnership is on four main areas to enable the partnership to maintain its collective strength and credibility. A programme of activity is being developed for each of the priorities:

1. Political influencing, particularly important in this General Election year
2. Developing an evidence-base including data collation
3. Prevention including services and medical research funding
4. Independent living and vision rehabilitation

These activities will be subject to robust progress monitoring to ensure that the Vision Partnership maximises impact. The aims, aspirations and functioning of the Vision Partnership will be underpinned by a position statement which will set out how lived experience will influence its work. Established areas of ongoing collaborative activity will also continue.

The transition into the Vision Partnership involves a collaborative process with input from all partners to achieve the new focus by September 2024.

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