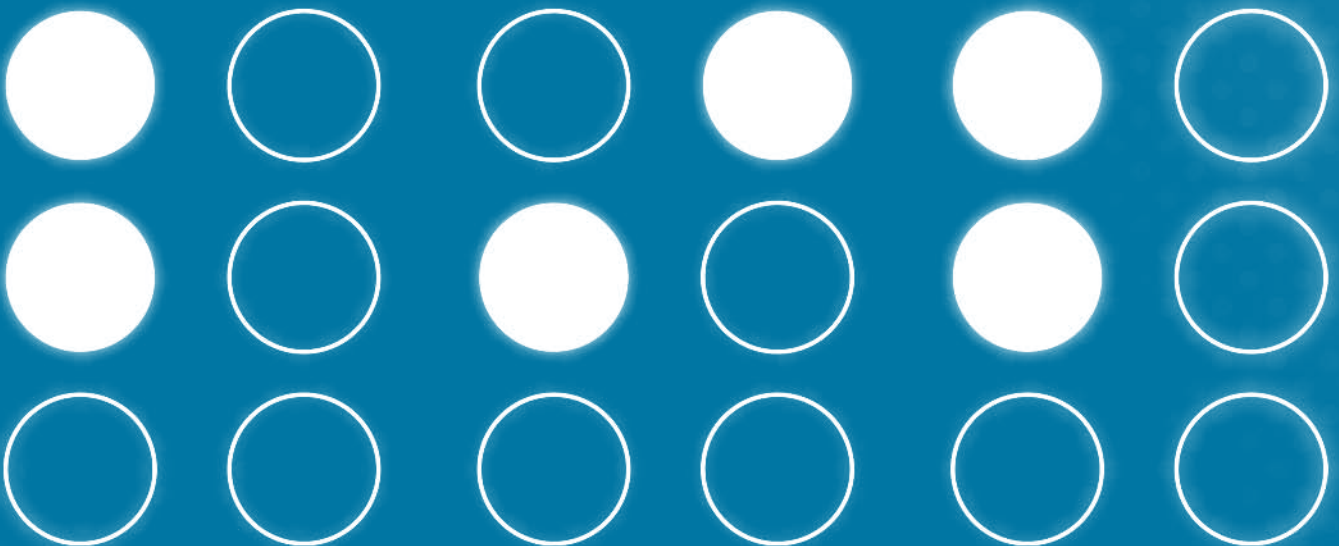




# BLIND IN BUSINESS

Annual Review 2005/2006



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We keep on doing what we exist to do, and do well: work with employers and with visually impaired schoolchildren and graduates.

The common element is the development of confidence.

The children get it by being shown the latest technology which they can use to go ahead to college, University and graduate jobs. We concentrate on some of them, bringing them to the office and taking them to visit role models who have achieved good jobs in many areas. We travel throughout the country to schools and give courses showing how much they can do if they believe they can, both with technology and with the thought that so many careers are open to them.



The Treasurer, David Watson, receiving a major grant from Hugh Oliver-Bellasis of the Merchant Taylors' Company.

The undergraduates and graduates get it by using our knowledge and links with employers in the training days we hold at City of London firms and institutions such as the Bank of England and Herbert Smith, Simmons and Simmons and Cameron McKenna. They get it by using our office and working with the people in it, producing proper CVs, having interview practice, giving a firm handshake – everything leading to them competing equally with others and getting jobs in line with their high qualifications. We go to Universities throughout the country and have practical links with blind undergraduates, who work with us towards jobs.

The employers get it by meeting visually impaired graduates informally and formally, sometimes for only ten minutes at a time on a day when twenty graduates come together with twenty employers. They get it by being able to ask Clare Young and Gen Herga for help with everything to do with the employment of a blind graduate, by asking how to turn tests into accessible formats, by asking easily all the questions they may be reticent to ask, and which make them uncertain.

We do not get anyone a job or move anyone ahead. The people for and with whom we work do that.

We work with 150 graduates and undergraduates each year. This is intensive and concentrated work, getting them to the point where they can apply for the careers they want.

Each year, fifty to sixty get those jobs.

Each year, we work closely with 50 major employers of graduates.

Each year, we give exhibitions of technology to 600 schoolchildren. Their parents and teachers take part.

We do these things well. Grant makers visit, evaluate, continue their grants. Graduates move ahead to do what they want to do. Children move ahead. Employers relax and appoint. We will continue to do these things, developing and diversifying when we need to, but maintaining this continuity.

**Michael Kenny**  
*Director*

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# Employment Service

Our Employment Service has been running for nine years. It has adapted to the changes in graduate recruitment techniques, from paper application forms and interviews to online applications, online assessments and comprehensive assessment centres. Our specialist knowledge combines an understanding of recruitment procedures with practical knowledge of the requirements of blind graduates.

Many blind graduates face difficulties in applying for jobs or places on graduate training schemes. We work with them and with graduate employers to make sure that the common problems of the selection process are removed so that blind candidates can have a fair chance of showing their capabilities.

## How we work with visually impaired graduates and undergraduates

Our Employment Service works with blind graduates and undergraduates throughout the UK, identifying recruiting companies and vacancies to apply to, especially through Graduate Recruitment Schemes.

### ● Application form support

We help with completing application forms; both paper forms and online forms which are still sometimes inaccessible despite the advances in technology.

### ● CV advice

We give CV advice on content and layout and often give a sighted opinion on a CV.

### ● Interview practice

We give interview practice to many of our candidates who may never have been interviewed before.

### ● Assessment centre practice

We provide assessment centre skills and reassurance that they won't be disadvantaged.

### ● Specialist technology

We give access to the right technology for work, enabling

candidates to experiment with equipment they might not have used before, to see how the latest hardware and software will help. We loan specialist equipment for assessment centres and ability tests.

#### ● “Access to Work” support

We help them with the Government-funded “Access to Work”, which pays for them to have the right equipment to do the job, once they have got the job.

#### ● Peer group support

Over the years our candidates have benefited greatly from meeting likeminded graduates, many of whom have experienced the same

frustrations in their search for work. Through our residential courses and social events, our candidates build strong support networks that serve to encourage and motivate through the difficult, competitive and often demoralizing search for work.

#### ● Networking opportunities

Through our events programme we often combine employer and candidate training so that each meets and become less nervous of the other. By drawing the two together each can find out a little more about the possibility of a career with that company and how that person works and the adjustments they may need within that company.

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## ➔ Universities, Employers and Test Publishers

Historically, work experience has been hard to gain but with changes in the Access to Work provision and our equipment loan scheme, this is now possible. We support individuals in the search for placements and paid work experience and often facilitate placements through our employer network.

### How we work with Universities

We work closely with the disability and careers departments of Universities throughout the country, describing the support we can offer their visually impaired students.

### How we work with Employers

The Employment Service gives employers practical help in making recruitment procedures more accessible. This means helping employers to attract blind applicants and allowing them to participate fully in assessment centres, getting the right technology for the candidate and ensuring that new recruits are integrated successfully into their new teams. We hold many workshops for

Human Resources staff, interviewers and assessors involved in recruiting. They include:

- Diversity speed recruitment
- “Education to employment” a summer training course
- Assessment centre workshops
- New employee guidance workshops
- Visual impairment awareness workshops

### How we work with Test Publishers

Many companies rely on paper-based testing materials. We give advice to companies who use these tests and the test publishers who write these tests on the most appropriate format to ensure the candidate can fully participate. We arrange for the tests to be transcribed into the various sizes of large print, Braille and audio. We work closely with our transcription agency to ensure that the tests are produced properly and on time.

# Training Service

## What is the training service?

Young blind people often are not even aware of the latest technology that could help them, or of the careers that are open to them. There often isn't enough help - mostly knowledge and guidance - for blind school leavers to make career choices they should be able to make.

It is hard for them to get the right sort of work. It is hard for everyone. For blind people, limitations are imposed by history and tradition and they can be faced with traditional occupations. There are not very many of them: they include piano tuning, bicycle repair and now call centres.

Our training courses give them the knowledge, the skills and the confidence to find a career.

We go into schools and work with children and their parents and teachers, all of whom develop confidence and benefit from technology. They begin to believe

they can do what they want to do. More than this, they find they can do a great deal more than they ever imagined they could do.

## Expectations Exceeded

Young blind people tend to have less confidence and lower expectations than those who can see.

Their families too often have low expectations and think their children only capable of doing stereotypical jobs (piano-tuning) or not capable of employment.

The Expectations Exceeded workshops challenge these low expectations by giving practical support and knowledge. At these workshops three or four blind people who have succeeded in getting good jobs come as role models and reinforce the idea that young blind people can do the same jobs as their sighted peers.

## Total Technology

### Access technology

There aren't many people who know enough about technology for blind and partially sighted people. We do. We know and describe and show the benefits it can bring to people at school, college, university and at work.

All our training reinforces the idea that information technology is the key to helping young blind people to move forward fast. Technology itself changes fast. We always have three to four suppliers of the latest technology to demonstrate it at our courses, to show young people what there is. The variety of equipment is considerable. So is the excitement when pupils try it out and find it helps.

As the course progresses through the year, more sophisticated equipment appears and is introduced. Pupils find that if they have the right technology, they can do far more than they thought they could do.

One of the most useful advances in technology is software that translates the written word into speech. A blind person can have information scanned into a system which then reads out the data at a convenient speed and in one of several accents and languages.

You can see straightaway how this changes lives, helps at school and college, at university, at work and how it helps get jobs.

Other developments include magnified font sizes so characters can be more easily read, digital cameras to enlarge the writing on a blackboard and hand held, digital magnifiers that enlarge print greatly.

Schoolchildren can try the technology, see what suits them, what they like. They might not be able to afford it at once, but to know it exists raises their expectations of themselves. Then they can go on with confidence to achieve these expectations.

# → Future Focus

## Career Planning

It is vital to raise the expectations and combat the assumptions about the employability of blind and partially sighted people, starting with the young blind people themselves. We give young blind people the knowledge, skills and confidence to take responsibility for their career and personal development.

Specialist knowledge of the impact of visual impairment at work is scarce outside the agencies and charities for the blind. Blind in Business aims to break the current monopoly of information and advice and empower blind and partially sighted people coming into the workforce to secure meaningful employment. We are in a unique position to bridge the gap between education and employment.

The Future Focus training course helps young blind people to:

- Acquire the right information about the educational opportunities available.
- Identify the necessary route through school, college and university to employment.
- Acquire the right information about employment prospects.
- Identify personal needs and abilities to meet their full work potential.
- Identify realistic opportunities that best meet their aspirations.
- Construct, implement and develop a personal career action plan.

## ➔ Further support

### Mentoring scheme

This year we have worked with 61 students aged 14-16 in small groups all over the UK but especially in London and Birmingham, helping them to develop and achieve their ambitions.

The work we do with these children is different on every occasion. For example, meeting blind people in the workplace to raise their confidence, learning how to become a computer programmer, shadowing people in the workplace to understand more about specific careers, visiting colleges/universities to learn about the opportunities available, corresponding with people who have similar eye conditions. This work is unique and our direct approach shows people the options available to them in an easily understood way. We make sure that teachers and parents/carers are involved to help the pupils progress and achieve their goals.

### A-Level scheme

We work with students wanting to get good jobs, but with A-Levels rather than university degrees. Tracking down such students who need our help has been challenging, but we believe that we can help them achieve their goals.

We have helped fund 2 A-level students to travel for their gap year.

This rare opportunity has given them a chance to explore and make decisions about their futures.

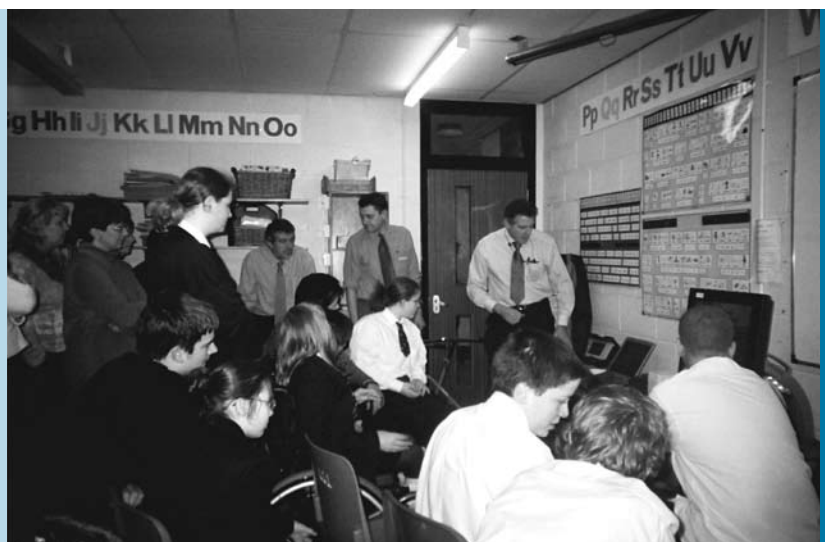
The people we work with dictate the help they need from us and we outline how we can best suit their needs. Some people are at college or others are out of education and looking for work.



Ryan using his new magnifying CCTV, with the giver, Peter Thompson of The Vision Charity



Technology course for children



## → Finances

### ↓ Summarised Statement of Financial Activities For the year ended 31 March 2006

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	TOTAL 2006 £	TOTAL 2005 £
Incoming Resources	84,912	112,829	197,741	273,405
<b>Resources Expanded</b>				
Fundraising costs	2,729	25,101	27,830	27,516
Governance	750	5,500	6,250	6,176
Charitable Activities	68,745	135,087	203,832	183,808
Total Resources Expended	72,224	165,688	237,912	217,500
<b>Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2005</b>	220,759	59,594	280,353	224,448
<b>Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 2006</b>	233,447	6,735	240,182	280,353

### ↓ Trustees' Statement

These summarized financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full annual financial statements, the auditor's report on those financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from "Blind in Business".

The full audited financial statements, from which these summary financial statements are derived and on which the Auditors gave an unqualified opinion, were approved on the 28th September 2006 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission.



## Summarised Balance sheet

	31 March 2006 £	31 March 2005 £
Fixed assets	1,564	585
Current assets	296,650	335,382
Creditors	58,032	55,614
Net assets	240,182	280,353
<b>Funds</b>		
General funds	233,447	220,759
Restricted funds	6,735	59,594
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>240,182</b>	<b>280,353</b>



## Auditor's Statement

Independent auditors' statement to the Trustees of "Blind in Business". We have examined the summarised financial statements set out above.

### Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Auditors.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this statement is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

### Basis of Opinion

We have carried out the procedures necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2006.

**PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.** Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors.



# Grant Makers

The organisations, people and grant-making  
Trusts who help us do this work include:

Adint Charitable Trust	The Ernest Cook Trust	George & Bonnie Muir
The Allen & Overy Foundation	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Richard Cloudesley Charity
Lord Archer	Eveson Charitable Trust	St. James's Place Foundation
ASAP Office Services Limited	Ford of Britain Trust	Saquib Sheik
The Band Trust	Future Link Software Limited	Steel Charitable Trust
Bridge House Estates Trust Fund	Garfield Weston Foundation	University of Bristol
The Lady Carter	Good Neighbours Trust	Woodward Charitable Trust
The Cecilia Charity for the Blind	Richard Hanson	The Xerox (UK) Trust
CHK Charities Limited	Linklaters	Ulverston Foundation
Coutts Charitable Trust	Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales	Victa Children Limited
Criteria Fieldwork Limited	Chris & Vanessa Lock	Vision Charity
Emlyn Hughes-Hallet Fund	Vera Mahon	The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
	Market & Opinion Research International Limited	

The Livery Companies of the City of London have been especially generous, both by coming to see what we do near them in the City and by making grants for us to do this work. We are one of the few charities in the City of London, and the City very much supports our work.

We are grateful for the support of the Corporation of London and of the Worshipful Companies of:

Goldsmiths, Merchant Taylors, Salters, Spectacle Makers, and Lightmongers.

As well, many people give as individuals. They often want to remain anonymous, but we thank them here.

# → Employers

## Employers:

These are some of the many firms and companies and organizations interested in the employment of blind graduates:

BT	Clifford Chance
Civil Service Fast Stream	Accenture
HBOS	BBC
Logica CMG	GCHQ
NHS	KPMG
Procter and Gamble	Sight Savers International
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Acumen Solutions
Shell	Unilever
CMS Cameron McKenna	RBS
Goldman Sachs	DSTL
Lehman Brothers	Bank of England
JP Morgan	Metropolitan Police
ABN Amro	Simmons and Simmons
Barclays Bank	Cadbury Schweppes
Herbert Smith	London Borough of Redbridge

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