



Annual Review 2005



listening and responding to people affected by sight loss in the west of scotland



People affected by sight loss risk losing their independence and self-confidence. Visibility has worked with people who are visually impaired for almost 150 years. We provide many different services, all of which help people stay independent and make choices. We tailor services to each individual.



A Year in Perspective

VISIBILITY ASSISTS PEOPLE affected by sight loss and their families. Whatever their age and circumstances, we make sure that everyone we work with is listened to and treated as an individual. By providing vital information, advice, practical and emotional support and opportunities we encourage independence, self-reliance and involvement.

We pride ourselves on breaking new ground. For example, we pioneered eccentric reading in the UK. Through our activities programme (Go!) we encourage people to do things they have been told all their lives that they cannot. We take risks, and so do our service users. The relationship we have with people makes a lasting difference. No two people receive the same services in the same way and that generates loyalty and trust.

The successes of the past year are the culmination of much hard work. We increased support for families in Lanarkshire, developed Go! with a committee of service users, set standards with our volunteer befrienders, established a strong partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions and achieved recognition from local authorities for our Home Support Service. Our vital Patient Support Service at Gartnavel Hospital continued to grow, and we published important research exploring different experiences of visual impairment.

Visibility offers specialist services which reflect what people need and want. This review gives a flavour of how we go about it.



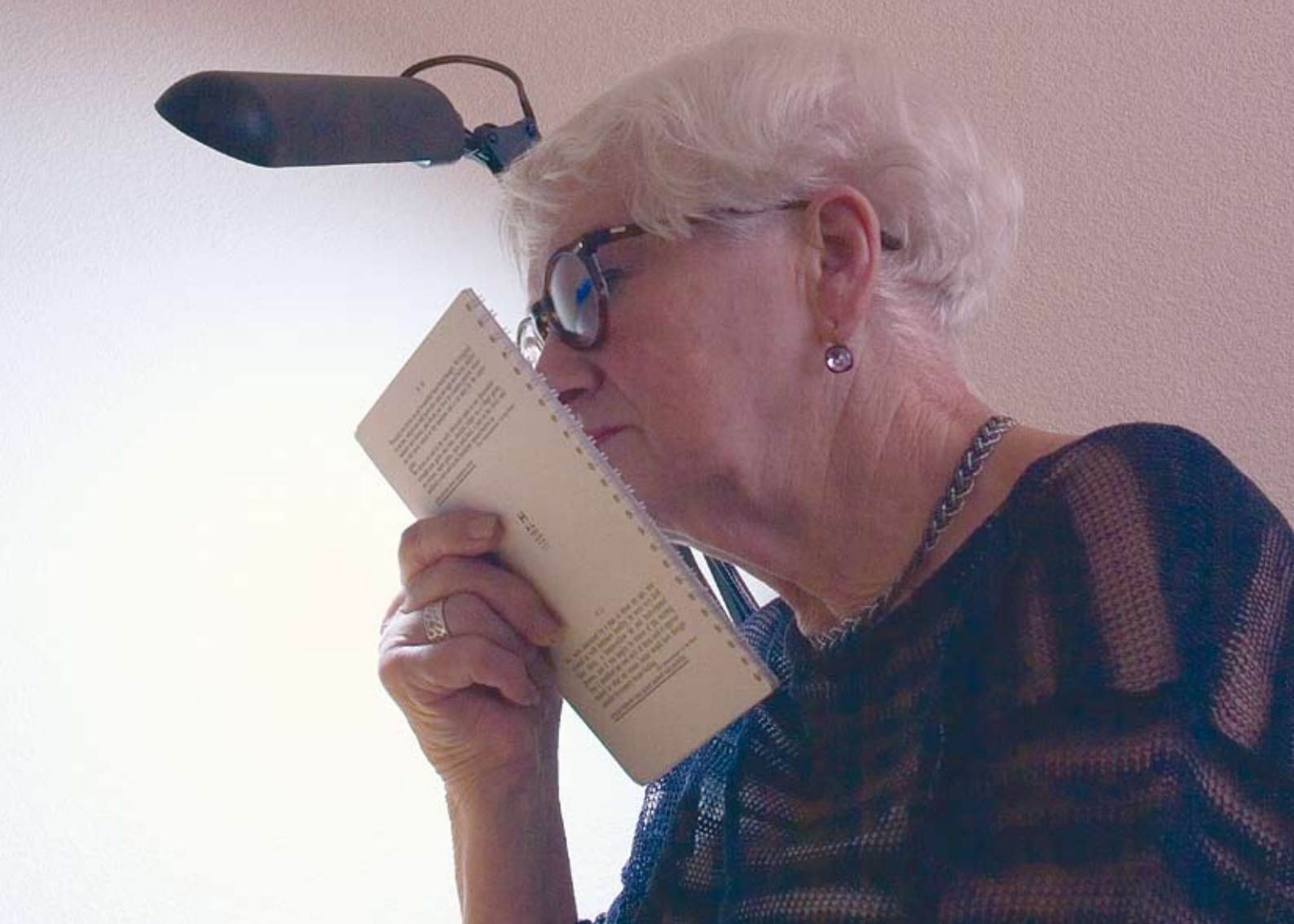


“PEOPLE SAY there is a spring in my step now,” comments Margaret.

“I’d met someone who’d been to Visibility and could now read a magazine so I phoned up and put my name on the list. Whether it worked or not, I was determined to go for it. It’s almost a year since then and I’m not reading War and Peace but I can read my bills.”

Margaret who is 76 has macular disease. She hadn’t been able to read for over five years and her consultant had told her there was nothing that could be done. But, Visibility trains people (150 to date) with central vision loss to read using a pioneering technique (eccentric reading) which relies on peripheral vision.

Margaret says that after three sessions with Visibility’s New View worker she could read again. “They came to me at home which was great as it’s hard for me to get out and taught me the technique. It’s made such a difference and given me such independence. I don’t need to wait for someone to come in and read my letters to me. I can see if there’s an increase on my electricity bill or any mistakes on my bank statement. My daughter died a few years ago and I can see her photo. I can see her face again.”



“...a dynamic organisation which both provides high quality local services and makes a valuable contribution to advancing the cause of blind and partially sighted people on a national basis. The research done by the organisation is consistently relevant and well presented. I particularly appreciate the work being done by colleagues from Visibility on many aspects of the Eye Care Review.”

Mike Cairns, Eye Care Review, Scottish Executive



“The Patient Support Service in Gartnavel Hospital is excellent. When our patients have suffered impairment in vision they need help and advice, which is now immediately available courtesy of Visibility. Nearly 1,000 patients a year now avail themselves of this service.”

Professor Gordon N Dutton, Consultant Ophthalmologist

“I HAD JUST MOVED into my own flat when I heard about Visibility,” says Andrew. In his mid-20s, Andrew had always stayed with his parents and was living independently for the first time. “I had no confidence in my ability to do housework and I was struggling with shopping and keeping my flat clean. I felt embarrassed about having people into the place.”

“Visibility allocated a support worker for a couple of hours each week. What a difference it made. I learned efficient ways to do hoovering, cleaning and shopping and got into a routine. It meant my place was presentable, I was eating properly and it made me feel better about myself. Visibility motivated me and, over time, the support worker would leave more and more up to me to do until I got to the point where I didn’t need her any more. I was impressed because the service wasn’t somebody else’s idea of what my needs would be, it was based on what I was struggling with at the time.”

“In terms of moving me on to my next stage in life it’s been invaluable. I felt so good about myself that I applied for and got a job as a support worker in a mental health team. I start next week.”





“THE FIRST TIME I went to Visibility I felt I was the only person to have a child with visual impairment. I felt so alone. I’d gone to a family day, and while my baby Scott played in the crèche, I met other parents. We’ve both come a long way since then.”

According to Jane, contact with Visibility made all the difference to her and Scott, now seven. She says, “Coming to activities at Visibility helped Scott become more independent and to mix with other children. We’ve both benefited from meeting others and going on outings to soft play, the carnival and ten-pin bowling. I used the welfare rights service to check that I was receiving the correct benefits and to find out about help for Scott as he grows up whether it’s to do with health, money or living independently. I also used Visibility when Scott started primary school. Visibility ran a visual impairment awareness day for the staff and pupils at his school so that they could understand what it’s like.”

“I am now working for Visibility myself, visiting people and helping to support them at home and encourage independence. My sister works in the Go! project. It’s just the best organisation.”



“Visibility has an impressive history in developing services and support for blind and partially sighted people in the west of Scotland. It is clearly focused on a challenging agenda, set by its service users, which provides both well-used and familiar services alongside groundbreaking initiatives – a potent mix for any organisation.”

John Legg, Director of RNIB Scotland



Looking Forward

VISIBILITY HAS BUILT up an excellent reputation and we are proud that so many people tell us how much they value us. However, with almost 21,000 people in the west of Scotland registered as blind or partially sighted, we know that many more could benefit from our services.

Over the coming year we plan to promote Visibility more widely so that more people know about us and how we can help. This includes extending services further afield for example through community-based projects for families as well as running a new counselling service in Lanarkshire.

Based on the overwhelming success of our New View service, which trains people in a pioneering reading technique, we intend to expand our low vision activity to include peer support, magnification, lighting and aids and equipment.

Many people affected by visual impairment encounter difficulties when going about their daily business. This can have a negative effect and may result in reduced confidence and increased isolation and dependence. This can be overcome if more people and organisations are aware of and sensitive to the needs of those with sight loss. We therefore intend to increase awareness of visual impairment through schools, organisations and the community as a whole.

We look forward to working with you in the exciting times ahead.



Raising Funds

VISIBILITY RELIES ON income from many sources. Over the past year, we received a substantial grant from the Big Lottery to expand community liaison work, and noticed an increase in people giving us regular monthly or annual donations. We have been able to develop our work through supporters leaving gifts in their wills, whether a fixed amount or a proportion of their estate. We are grateful to all those who choose to leave such a gift.

We generated new income, for example from the Abbey Charitable Trust for specialist equipment for our welfare rights work. Other new supporters included Greggs the Bakers and Freescale Semiconductor UK Ltd and staff of the Abbey National in Glasgow.

We enjoy great goodwill and support from service users and their families and we have taken a new direction by involving them in fundraising. We are particularly proud of those who took part in the ten-pin bowling challenge, the 14 people who abseiled off Finnieston Crane and our enthusiastic volunteer fundraisers who raised almost £6,000.

THANK YOU Everything we do we owe to you, our donors, supporters and volunteers. Together we make Visibility what it is. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported our work this year.









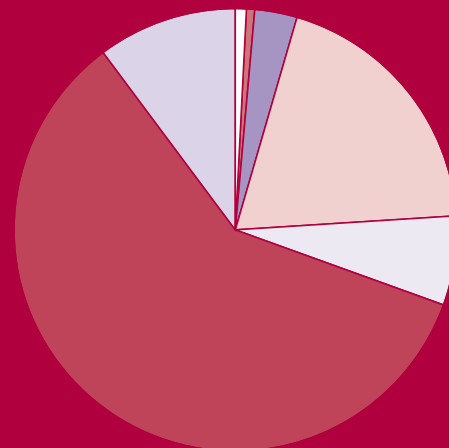
Summary of income and expenditure for the year 1 May 2004 to 30 April 2005

Auditor: Nelson Gilmour Smith, Mercantile Chambers, 53 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 6TB


Accounts

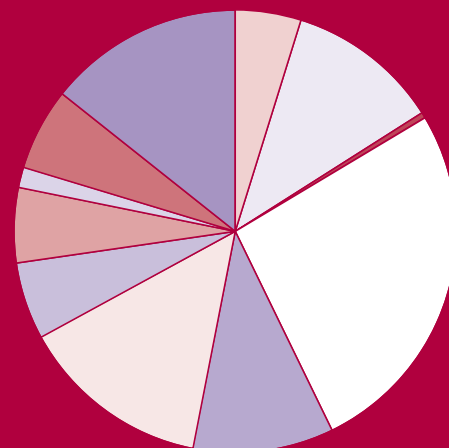
INCOME (Total £744,783)

Donations/Trusts	£76,228	
Grants & Contract Income	£441,518	
Legacies	£48,307	
Investment income	£145,352	
Interest income	£22,860	
Training income	£4,663	
Net gain on investments	£5,855	



EXPENDITURE (Total £764,833)

Provision of charitable activities	£109,272	
Welfare Rights	£45,804	
Volunteer Befriending	£11,188	
New View	£42,149	
GO Adult and Children	£43,199	
Patient Support/Research	£106,851	
Community Liaison	£78,754	
Supporting People	£202,293	
Grants paid to social clubs	£3,265	
Management & Administration	£85,664	
Fundraising & Publicity	£36,394	



For a copy of our audited accounts please contact us.



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Registration number: SC116522 Scottish Charity number: SCO 09738

Visibility is the trading name of GWSSB (formerly Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for the Blind). GWSSB is a company, registered in Scotland, limited by guarantee with its registered office at 2 Queens Crescent, Glasgow, and a recognised Scottish charity.

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