



visibility

Autumn 2004

Welcome to our Autumn 2004 Newsletter!

In this edition you will find interesting information on our work and also some news about recent achievements. Bobby Simpson, Visibility's Chairperson retires at the AGM later this year following 14 years of involvement with the organisation. Details of our new chairperson in the Christmas newsletter! I am delighted to report a good response from people interested in joining the Board following our recent appeal so thank you to everyone who contacted us.

We are appealing for volunteers who would be interested in working with Sarah Hunter our Fundraising Manager. Sarah is looking for people who enjoy meeting people and talking to various groups. We would like to train a small team of volunteers to give talks on sight loss and the work of Visibility.

If you would enjoy this, please get in touch. We will offer training to suitable applicants – to enable you to deal with the difficult questions often posed by young children!

Visibility is in the process of developing our new website. We would like to hear from anyone who would be willing to try out the accessibility of the site before we go live with it. If you can help, please get in touch.

As always, if you have any ideas, suggestions or comments on any aspect of Visibility please call Fiona Sandford, Chief Executive.

New Project Supporting Families

Visibility has recently expanded its role in North and South Lanarkshire to include specific support for families affected by visual impairment.

Kerrie Brown, Community Liaison worker, is delighted to be taking this service forward. The project will take the form of quarterly information and support sessions for families.

“The themes of the sessions will very much depend on the ideas and wishes of the parents. Some topics already suggested are: registration process; benefit entitlement; social issues and transition to secondary and higher education.”

If anyone is interested in being part of the parents consultation group who will make decisions about the content of the sessions, or simply be kept informed about dates of meetings, please contact Kerrie. **Tel: 0141 332 4632: Email: kerrie@visibility.org.uk.**

New hours for Information & Advice Line

Our information and advice line is available to anyone with a query relating to visual impairment - **the number is 0141 572 0746**

From October 2004 someone will be available on the telephone during the following hours, excluding public holidays or office shutdown over the Christmas and New Year period:

Monday – Thursday	9.15am – 4.45pm
Friday	9.15am – 4.15pm

Endorsement for Welfare Rights Team

Visibility's Welfare Rights Service provides information and advice to visually impaired people on how to access social security benefits. The team consists of Louise Wilson and Pat Martin, who, since 1995, have assisted around 2,500 visually impaired people to access over £2 million in unclaimed benefits.

Pat and Louise can visit people in their homes or appointments can be made to see them at Visibility's premises. They are also available every Wednesday from 10am to 4pm at the Centre for Sensory Impairment, Social Work Department, 17 Gullane Street, Partick. This service is currently only available to people in Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire.

Visibility are delighted that the Welfare Rights Service is the first voluntary organisation in Scotland to be selected as an 'Alternative Office' by the Pensions Service, Department of Work and Pensions. This is great news as it speeds up the process for all concerned.

Contact Pat or Louise on 0141 572 0748.

Visibility Registers with Care Commission

Welfare Rights, Befriending and our Home Support Service are now registered with the Care Commission. We are really pleased to have completed the registration process and to have Visibility recognised. The Care Commission will inspect Visibility to ensure that we are continuing to adhere to our usual high standards of service provision. If people have any concerns or complaints about Visibility's services, we hope that we can sort it out, however if not, they can now contact the Care Commission who will investigate it independently.

Visibility Publishes Latest Research Findings

In partnership with Greater Glasgow NHS Board we have conducted two pieces of valuable research, which will help inform future service provision.

The first report reflects on the process of establishing our new Patient Support Service at Gartnavel Hospital. The research shows an overwhelmingly positive response from patients and professionals to the extent it is now considered an essential and integral part of the Eye Department.

The second report explores how many people are living with serious sight loss and are unknown to specialist services. Carried out with West Dunbartonshire Council the findings clearly demonstrate that it is crucial to have information, support, aids and equipment when sight problems first start to impact on quality of life.

Summaries and full reports are available from the Health Liaison Team on 0141 332 4632 or email:

shelagh@visibility.org.uk

scampbell@visibility.org.uk

celia@visibility.org.uk



Positive Feedback for Visibility

During the summer months we carried out an evaluation of our work. As part of the process we asked people what they thought of Visibility's services and here are some comments people made:

Community Liaison: **"Some days everything goes wrong and you just need someone to talk to. It helped me come to terms with losing my sight."**

Home Support Service: **"Without it I would be stuck and unable to get out."**

New View: **"I got so frustrated but now I don't; I try more things now."**

Patient Support: **"It was there for me when I needed to talk to someone."**

Welfare Rights: **"Before making contact, I was living on virtually no money. They have kept in contact and helped me with appeals and things like that."**

Volunteer Befriending: **"Offers friendship and allows me to go places that would otherwise be very difficult."**

Go! Adult: **"I have done things I would never have done when I was sighted, like abseiling and canoeing."**

Go! Youth: **"I have made lots of new friends, if I didn't come to GO! I would just sit in the house."**

Celebration Event

An event to mark our new identity took place in the magnificent setting of the Grand Hall of the Trades Hall on Thursday 3 June 2004.

Our Chairperson, Bobby Simpson welcomed guests. Guests were entertained with music performed by Ian Cochrane, Alan Graham and Shelagh Donnelly from the Go! Music group. Our thanks to everyone who attended and to all the companies and organisations that kindly donated prizes for the raffle, which raised £250.

Bobby Simpson MBE
addressing the guests at
our Celebration Event.



Up and Coming Fundraising Events

Our first fundraising event will take place on Thursday 25 November at AMF Finnieston. Companies will be asked to enter teams to compete for the Visibility Challenge Cup and teams will take part in a ten pin bowling event with a difference!

Sarah is keen to hear from anyone who would like to organise their own fundraising event, or take part in an event. There are many ways in which we can help, from providing you with encouragement, advice and your own fundraising pack.

At Visibility a growing band of supporters have chosen to support us with a regular gift by standing order . This is a wonderful means of support allowing us to plan ahead. **If you would like more details on making a donation or further information on any of the above please contact Sarah Hunter our Fundraising Manager on 0141 332 4632 or sarah@visibility.org.uk.**

Support for Visibility

Our grateful thanks to everyone who has supported our work, in particular to the following individuals, companies and organisations:

Everyone who took part in the Glasgow Women's 10k, the Great Scottish Run and Junior Great Scottish Run.

Our thanks also to the following individuals who have raised funds: Mary Ramage; Robert Halpin; Moira Auld and Kirsty McConnechie from The Cassilis Hotel, Maybole; Joyce Burnie, Eddie Maxwell, Pat Harkin and the regulars of The Barnhill Tavern, Blantyre.

A special mention to Howard Ashton who has embarked on a solo cycle trip across The Ukraine. Howard hopes his endeavours will raise £1,000 for Visibility. We wish Howard lots of luck with his journey and fundraising efforts.



Howard Ashton
Befriender and Volunteer.

Visibility is extremely grateful for the support we receive from local companies and organisations. Our thanks to the Community Committee of John Lewis, Glasgow; the 22nd and 23rd Bearsden Brownies; The Local Charity Shop, Pollokshields; Soroptimist International of Glasgow South; Mayfield Primary School, Saltcoats.

STOP PRESS!!

Go! Bowlers

Our congratulations to the Go! Bowling team who came second in the British Blind Sports Ten Pin Bowling Finals in Sheffield on 15 May 2004. Well done to the team; John Docherty, Collette Vassie, Robert White, James Marshall and Jenny Kelloch.

Looking for Testers!

Clarifeye Ltd are looking for website testers. Users of screen readers, refreshable Braille displays, screen magnification or any other assistive technology would be particularly useful but not essential. They pay a rate of £20 per hour. **Please contact David Murdoch, Clairifeye Ltd at david@clarifeye.com tel: 08707 607 123 (selecting option 3 followed by option 2).**

Staffing News

Visibility has three new faces: Paul McArthur has joined our Community Liaison Team; Ros Docherty is the most recent addition to our New View Team; Rosemary Cameron has joined us as Volunteer Coordinator

We are currently recruiting staff for our Go! project.

**For more details on any aspect of Visibility
please contact 0141 332 4632**

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, G4 9BW. Registration Number: SC116522 Scottish Charity Number: SCO09738