



**SIGHT
ADVICE**

SOUTH LAKES

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Trustees of Sight Advice South Lakes 2016 / 2017



Sight Advice South Lakes at a Glance

<p>Sight Advice Centre until September 2016. Bradbury Centre from October 2017</p>	<p>Information, aids and equipment</p>	<p>The new Bradbury Centre is seeing on average 139 visitors per month. From October 2016 to March 2017 we had 60 new people visit us</p>
<p>Eye Clinic Liaison Officer</p>	<p>Information and Support when attending eye clinic appointments</p>	<p>502 people supported</p>
<p>Hospital Information Service</p>	<p>Information and practical advice</p>	<p>Under review during 2016/17. New model of delivery planned for 17/18</p>
<p>Support and Information Groups</p>	<p>Local community support</p>	<p>Facilitated 72 monthly information and support group meetings in 6 different areas supporting 87 people</p> <p>10 Dual Sensory Loss group meetings supporting 82 people</p>
<p>Community Development</p>	<p>Specialist Support</p>	<p>242 home visits to 146 people</p> <p>98 people received telephone support regarding equipment</p> <p>93 people received telephone calls for emotional support</p>
<p>Technology Service</p>	<p>Independent living</p>	<p>73 people supported throughout the year with 65 home visits and 32 visits to view equipment at the Bradbury Centre</p> <p>61 people attended the annual Future Vision event</p> <p>10 drop in Computer chat groups</p>

Positive Steps	Independent Living	3 positive steps courses attended by 14 people 1 refresher course attended by 8 people 12 positive steps home visits
Communications	Keeping people informed	Produced 6 editions of the Sight Advice South Lakes magazine reaching over 490 service users 78 volunteers and sent to over 150 local groups and organisations
User Forums		4 user forums attended by 40 people
Volunteers	Underpinning all our services	138 people contributing over 8000 hours
Children and Young People Project	Activities and Support for under 18's	18 families supported 6 activities 2 DVDs
Social and Leisure activities	Activities and good company	VITAL Group attended by 27 people (17 members and 10 volunteers) Sailing, walking and monthly evening social attended by 30 people
Community Fundraising	Income for the Charity	£14,998 raised
Building Appeal	Better facilities, high street location	Moved to The Bradbury Centre, 116 Highgate, Kendal in September 2016
Partnership Working	Working together	Charity CEO Chairs the Gateway Collaborative and Consortium of Cumbria Societies for the Blind. 93 people supported through the low vision service

Organisation

Sight Advice South Lakeland is an independent registered Charity, No 1145818. Formerly known as South Lakeland Society for the Blind and South Lakeland Voluntary Society for the Blind, the Charity was established in 1956, and was registered as a company limited by guarantee No 7879355, from 1 April 2012. All assets and liabilities were transferred to the new Charity starting on 1 April 2012. Sight Advice South Lakes is a member of Visionary a membership organisation for local independent charities that support blind and partially sighted people across the UK. Visionary acts as the collective voice for local societies.

Registered Office The Bradbury Centre, 116 Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4HE

Enquiries 01539 769055 or info@sightadvice.org.uk

Chief Executive Mrs Claire Park

Chair of Trustees Mrs Margaret McCulloch

Purpose

Sight Advice South Lakes aims to support people with visual impairment to improve the quality of their lives, together with promoting greater awareness of sight issues.

We aim to do this by:

- Enabling visually impaired people to live independently
- Providing practical and emotional support to visually impaired people and their families and carers
- Enabling visually impaired people to access social support and activities
- Promoting awareness of sight issues and to campaign with, and on behalf of, visually impaired people

Values

Following a staff and Trustee away day held in September 2017 the team agreed the following values and how they are seen in practice.

Making a Difference - Proactive, if we can help we will

Team Work - Accessible to each other, democratic feel

Honesty - Saying things clearly, saying the unpopular thing

Listening - Building a relationship, conveying listening through eye contact, voice etc.

Professional - Doing the job well, customer focussed, treating colleagues with respect

Personal Touch - Reputation for support, not putting up barriers, caring and friendly

People

During the year the Charity was supported by 93 individual members, 11 staff members, 7 trustees and a team of 138 volunteers

Services

Sight Advice Centre

Until September 2016 the Sight Advice Centre was based within Stricklandgate House where the Charity had been based since 1990. Following a successful building appeal launched in August 2014 the Charity became the proud owners of the Bradbury Centre, 116 Highgate, Kendal in March 2016 and moved into the property in September 2016. The Bradbury Centre is open Monday – Thursday, 9.30 am – 4 pm.

A visitor to the Centre finds a friendly warm welcome from our Sight Support Staff and is able to view a wide variety of aids and technology to help visually impaired people to remain as independent as possible. There are displays of phones, clocks, watches, children's toys and games, tablets, kindles and computers.

Advice to help find the best piece of equipment for the individual is provided by staff and volunteers, some of whom are visually impaired themselves and have direct experience of the benefits that these aids can bring. The Sight Advice Centre allows visually impaired people to have personal guidance on what suits them and the opportunity to try the equipment before purchasing.

“It's made me realise what help there is. It's reassuring that I am not the only one. It's been very useful to talk to others and share experiences. Having your support is very useful – I know I can talk to someone for advice.”



**In 2016-17, the Sight Advice Centre and
The Bradbury Centre received over 950 visits.**

As well as hosting all the charities administrative functions, the centre also doubles as a place for the Low Vision Service, the Positive Steps group and the Dual Sensory Loss group.

During the past 12 months we have been able to set up new social groups for visually impaired people and the regular games afternoon and monthly Kendal social are proving a huge success.

*“The new Centre is a wonderful set up,
reception is just the right size.”*

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

The Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) is based in the Macular Unit at Westmorland General Hospital on Mondays and Wednesdays each week. The Macular Unit is a diagnostic and treatment clinic for people with wet AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration) as well as people with Macular Oedema (MO) and Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO). The ECLO has a desk in the waiting area so is very visible to patients and their families as well as the clinical staff.

The ECLO role is varied and aims to support patients when first diagnosed and help ensure they understand what happens next. Whether it's supporting patients with a course of treatment, aiding people on discharge or making sure they have ongoing support within their own area the ECLO is a vital service to patients. People come from a broad geographical area, and this is the only treatment clinic within the Morecambe Bay.

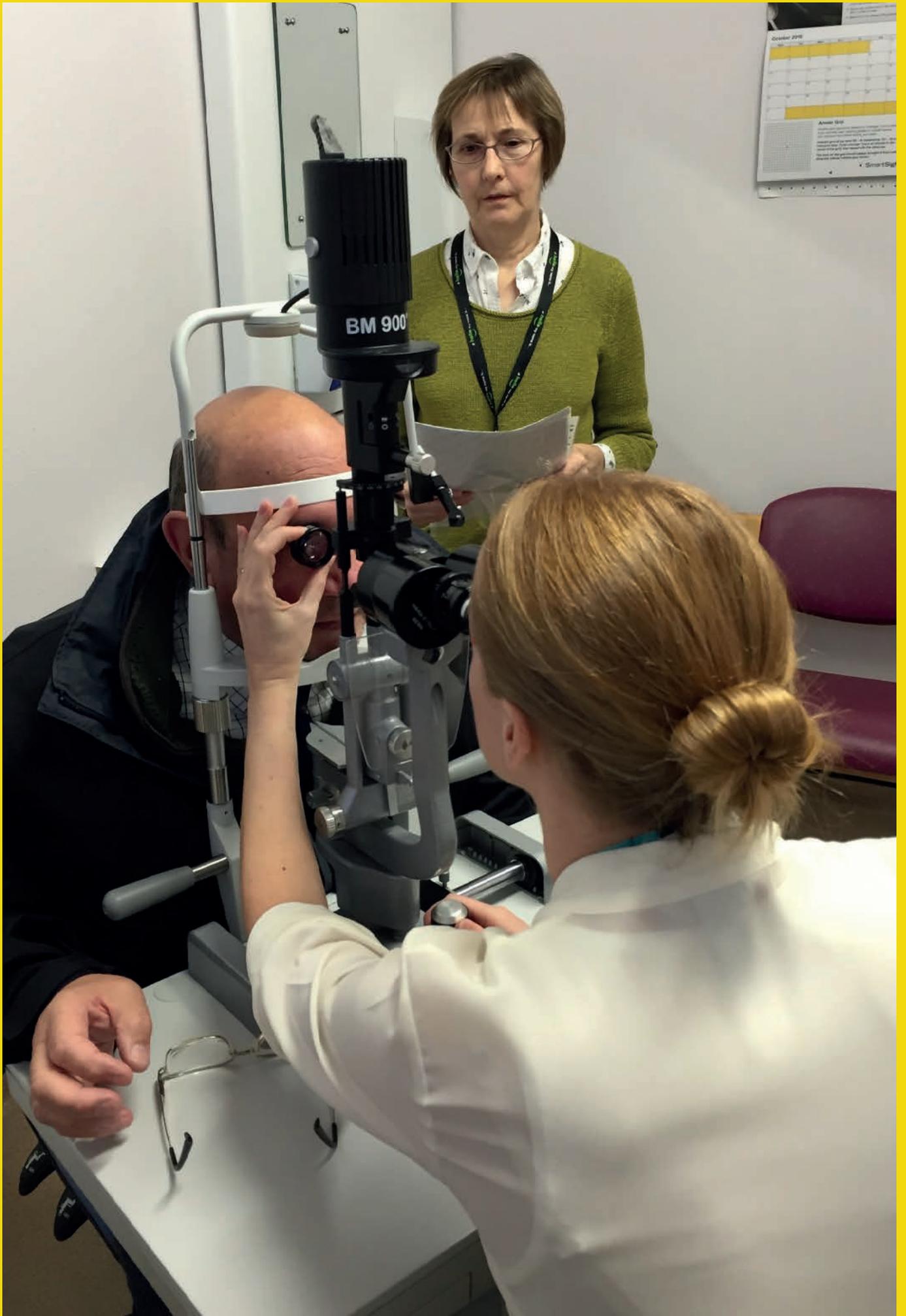
The ECLO gives information on a wide range of topics, advises on equipment and aids, accompanies people to their appointment and assists in the completion of Certificates of Visual Impairment (CVIs). The completion of the CVI is the first stage of registration and it is very important for patients to understand the process and next steps. The ECLO works closely with the consultants, nurses and health care teams raising awareness of the needs of people with sight loss whenever possible.

This year the ECLO has supported 502 people, an increase of 14% on the previous year.

“When the optician can't do anything for you and the hospital can't do anything for you, it is amazing what Sight Advice can do. They give you coping strategies and I am very grateful.”

“I realise that I'm not alone now that I've been talking to you.”

“It's so lovely that you are here, I don't have to worry about coming. I never feel anxious, knowing you're going to be here really helps.”



Hospital Information Service

The Patient Information Desk based within the Outpatient Department at Westmorland General Hospital has historically been staffed by a team of dedicated and experienced volunteers. When people are first diagnosed with sight threatening conditions it often comes as a shock - the team on the information desk, some of whom have sight loss themselves, can be very reassuring. For many, it has been an invaluable point of contact.

During this year the presence of the volunteers has reduced and we are currently not present in the Outpatients Department in the same format. This is a temporary arrangement and innovations and developments within the local hospital trust offer a variety of opportunities for us to enhance our presence at the hospital. In the year 2017 – 2018 we aim to enhance this partnership and provide a valuable service to visually impaired people and health professionals across the hospital. We will continue to provide a range of information including eye specific conditions, low vision assessments and support groups.

There continues to be a small display of aids and equipment in the Outpatients Department which people can try including clocks and watches. Some of the smaller items such as pens, diaries and calendars and bump-ons can be purchased.



Information and Support Groups

We currently have 87 members who attend our six Information and Support groups in the South Lakes area. They meet monthly and the group aims to provide social contact and mutual support. The group also acts as a forum where members can share problems and swap their wealth of experience. This year members have enjoyed a range of events such as a Lakeland Quiz, music reminiscence, outings for morning coffee and afternoon tea – as well as a Beetle Drive using giant dice!

In addition we also have a Dual Sensory Loss (DSL) group which meets monthly in our Centre with 12 regular members. Everyone who attends has both hearing and sight loss. People who have poor sight tend to rely more on their hearing, and people with poor hearing tend to rely more on their sight. Having a combined hearing and sight loss can lead to many difficulties and the group is invaluable to its members and the people who care for them.

As well as providing support and social contact the groups also reduces anxiety, isolation and depression for people who have problems with both senses. Throughout the last 12 months the group has enjoyed a variety of speakers including from organisations which provide specialist support on sight and hearing loss as well as more light hearted topics. The loop system ensures people are able to fully participate.



Community Development

The community development officer continues to provide both telephone and home visiting, thus taking Sight Advice Centre services out to people who struggle to get into the town. The role aims to maximize people's independence, safety and quality of life. Demonstration of equipment continues to be an integral part of the role including large buttoned telephones, talking mobile phones, the Sonic talking book USB players, and pen friends. The recent advent of talking command devices (such as Alexa) is an exciting development. RNIB Talking Books have recently been made free of charge, and we are pleased to report there has been a large take up of books, which for many, can help fill the lonely times at home. The community development officer is also able to take the time to listen to people's worries and concerns and give them a chance to talk to a neutral person.

The role is also key in signposting to other useful partners such as South Lakeland Carers, Age UK, Alzheimer's Society and the Fire Safety Check Service. It's a prime example of how we use partnership working to benefit our members.

A secondary aspect of the role is education and promotion and this year the community development officer has given different talks to local organisations including the Ambleside Long Term Conditions group.

"What would we do without you? You are a Godsend."

"A lot of things were bothering me that I have now found answers to."

"Sometimes it is the little things that make a big difference."

Technology Service

During the year the assistive technology service has provided support to a total of 73 individuals. This is a huge increase on last year of 69%. The support consisted of home visits, visits by clients to The Bradbury Centre, and support via email and telephone.

Our annual exhibition, Future Vision was well attended, with 14 exhibitors and over 60 people visiting the event held in April 2017. We also hosted three demonstration days by assistive technology companies through the year.

Case Study - Mr W attended Sight Advice South Lakes Low Vision Clinic after being referred via his consultant. He was prescribed a hand held magnifier, with a light inside, which greatly helped with some of his reading.

However as he has been a writer in the past, he wanted to transcribe his old handwritten notes onto his desk top computer. This was something he had wanted to do for years but due to failing sight had thought that this was too difficult to undertake. Even with the hand held magnifier it was difficult as full lines were not possible and his handwriting was small.

This imposed frustrating time delays, as he was frequently moving his hands from his magnifier to his desktop computer. Also he was unsure if he had typed the correct letters on his desktop computer.

A home visit by the Assistive Technology Co-ordinator to assess his workstation with a view to suggesting a way forward was arranged.

Mr W had limited space to work from, and at the end of the assessment the following suggestions were made.

- 1) Look at Dolphin “talking” and magnification software for his desktop.**
- 2) Look at desktop magnifiers.**
- 3) Think of changing desktop keyboard.**

Mr W attended a demonstration of both Dolphin and magnification.

He initially tried Dolphin on a free trial, but this did not work out so the Assistive Technology Co-ordinator suggested turning on the “free” talkback feature “narrator” which when he chooses to turn it on, will identify which keys have been pressed so any mistakes can be rectified early on

This was used in conjunction with a travel magnifier he purchased from the demonstration he attended, the size of an ipad which magnifies his notes in a way he can read from his desktop seat rather than always bending down. Also changed his keyboard to a black text on yellow keys style.

He is now happy transcribing his notes and other tasks on his desktop computer something he thought he would never be able to undertake.



Future Developments

There are some amazing technology companies for people who have sight loss, and developments over the last 12 months in magnification, lighting, brailers, talking phones and book reading devices has been fantastic

Apple have a large amount of accessibility built into iPhones and iPads and part of the role of the Assistive Technology Co-ordinator is to assist people to access this free technology.

For example iPhones/ iPads have a talkback feature that reads text on the screen, have a built in magnifier and you can also text and phone just by voice.

Voice activated robots such as Amazons Alexa, Google Home and Apple SIRI, are proving very popular in South Lakes as they can be purchased in Currys and Argos quite inexpensively. People can ask for the news and weather, play thousands of radio stations, tell the time, get rail times, shop, have kindle read, music played, set an alarm, turn on lights, answer the door and now make phone calls all by voice activation.

Other developments are in the world of Artificial Intelligence, (AI) whereby software on your phone can be pointed at objects/ people and your phone will identify them. This AI is also becoming available in free apps on your phone, already there are apps that can take pictures and identify what is on the picture by talking back to you on your phone.

AI can also be used in what is termed “wearable” technology such as the Orcam, which is a pair of glasses that will take a photo discreetly, then explain it, for example a menu in a restaurant is read back into a tiny earpiece attached the glasses.

At Sight Advice South Lakes we are ensuring that people have access to the specialist products by holding regular demonstrations by the top specialist companies, and also promoting the new products on the high street that can be used by all the family.

Smart devices, voice activated robots, artificial intelligence and wifi are opening up all types of possibilities for people with sight loss. At Sight Advice courses and one to one support is available to ensure people in the South Lakes are up to date and even ahead of the curve in this exciting and fast developing world.

“Thank you - you have no idea what a difference this will make for me. There must be fifty things, probably more, that I will be able to do now, that I haven’t been able to do for so long now.”

Positive Steps Information Group

This year has seen a new development in the delivery of the popular Positive Steps courses. As some of our members are becoming older and frailer the Sight Advice team have been developing a series of home visits which replicate, as far as possible, the sessions we run in our centre. 12 people have received home visits and the feedback has shown how much people appreciate the sessions being held in their own home. The aim remains the same as for the centre held courses – to help maintain independence.

Three courses have been held in our centre this year with 14 people attending and a further 8 people attended the annual update/refreshers session.

The courses have seen attendance increase by 17% compared to last year.

The positive steps course runs for five consecutive weeks and covers a different aspect of sight loss including;

- Overview of visual impairment
- Getting around safely
- Reading and writing aids
- Daily living aids for the home
- Benefits and concessions

“The organisation is a vast source of help, information and encouragement. I now know where to come in the future.”

“Sessions were very useful and complimented each other, it’s good to know you are not alone.”

Communications

Our Sight Advice South Lakes Magazine is a source of information for blind and visually impaired people in the South Lakes area. The magazine is produced in large print, Braille, audio, and email and reaches over 1300 people each issue. This year we produced 6 editions of the magazine of which we sent 450 to clients, 75 to volunteers and over 150 local groups and organisations.

“Living in a small village, well you can feel quite isolated. Receiving the magazine gives me a link to Sight Advice and keeps me up to date. It’s a good informative read.”

User Forums

We continue to hold 4 User forums a year. The forums provide an opportunity for anybody linked to Sight Advice to provide feedback on the need, availability and quality of the support and services that we provide to our members. During the year 40 people attended forums across the region in Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale, Windermere and Arnside. We have received valuable feedback in relation to the services that are provided. We have summarised some of the feedback and any action taken below:

You said:	We did:
Volunteers would like a designated point of contact for support.	During this year we successfully secured funding for a new role of Volunteer Support Officer. With the new role starting in the year 2017 – 2018 we are sure that many positive changes will be felt for volunteers
People living in rural communities find it difficult to access technology, as not everyone can travel to Kendal for IT support.	We secured funding from Visionary to take our technology support out into the rural communities in South Lakeland. This programme of events started in January 2017 and will continue into the coming year.
The speed of traffic and parking is a problem throughout the region	The Development Officer for Cumbria Societies for the Blind has supported a number of individuals and groups to raise issues with local and county council for matters relating to highways

Volunteer

Sight Advice was successful in obtaining funding to employ a part-time Volunteer Support Officer who now looks after the interests of our 138 volunteers. Volunteers support us in over 30 different roles including fund-raising, befriending, driving, facilitating groups, administration, reception and awareness raising.

Our volunteers are integral in every aspect of our work, they are the heart of our organisation, their roles are many and varied which is a great asset in volunteer recruitment and retention.

Around 27% of our volunteers are visually impaired, this compares favourably to national organisations such as RNIB who state that 16% of their volunteers have a visual impairment. However, there are challenges ahead as volunteers naturally step down through illness and re-location. There are urgent needs in the areas of fund raising, be-friending and group leadership. Sight Advice has to attract volunteers and with increasing demand for volunteers in the sector as a whole, it is important that volunteering with Sight Advice continues to be a positive and rewarding experience.

With this in mind, our volunteers now have the opportunity to take part in workshops for self-development and feedback as well as receiving regular updates on volunteering opportunities, training and news via email.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers for the vital work they do.

“I have met some wonderful people whilst volunteering.”

“I was nervous at first but soon realised that people were listening to what I had to say. I am quite confident now.”



Volunteer Jan Graham receiving long service award for over 30 years' service

Children and Young People's Project

Our Children and Young People's project continues to work with people aged 0-18 and we have a designated project co-ordinator, who works with young people and families. This year the project has worked with 18 young people and children with visual impairment and their families.

The project has offered many exciting activities including the traditional Christmas theatre trip - an excellent audio described performance of Pinocchio. We would like to extend our special thanks to the Dukes Theatre, Lancaster for making this trip possible. A touch tour prior to the performance made this annual trip very special for all involved.

Another excellent goal ball afternoon was held at a local primary school in Kendal. Everyone always enjoys this Paralympic event and one visually impaired participant, asked us to return to the school to work with his class friends, in order to share what he experiences. It is wonderful when the benefits of the project are recognised by peers and they seek to engage in new ways.

"It was brilliant, lots of fun."



Young people also had a fantastic time at a drama session led by Graham from Tread, who previously worked in the London West end. Through games and drama exercises participants were able to improve their confidence and self-expression through using their voices and body language. This session also enabled young people to get to know new and existing members of the Sight Advice young people groups through shared experiences.

“It is definitely something I would love to do again.”

A significant change to the project occurred in February when we welcomed Alicia Makinson as our new Project Co-ordinator. Alicia continues the great work of our previous co-ordinator, Jan Quinn, offering both emotional and practical support along with organising a wide range of fun, exciting and often challenging activities for all age groups. Alicia brings with her a wealth of experience from previous roles working closely with children and families.



Social and Leisure Activities

Sailing

Blackwell Sailing Centre continues to provide bi weekly evening sailing sessions on Lake Windermere for our VITAL members. They have three Wammel boats and two Access dinghies' for those who wish to get closer to the water! The sail is followed by a debrief with a cup of something hot and some biscuits.

The centre provides volunteers to help teach sailing skills as well as provide alternative entertainment when the wind drops! We appreciate their enthusiasm! The group has grown this year, and we now have two children from Sight Advice who attend with their parents - they also attended the summer sail and camp event and the winter canoeing session.



Walking Group

The walking group started the year by celebrating a member's royal honour. Duncan Hamlett was awarded a MBE for his charity work and the group had a great time celebrating with him. Duncan is a highly appreciated member of the walking group and all at Sight Advice pass on their congratulations to him

The 16/17 walking programme commenced in March with a walk from Cark to Cartmel. Further walks included the Canal at Bolton le Sands, Hest Bank, Rydal Water, Elterwater, Coniston and Milnthorpe. During the walks guides are moved around so that the VIPs can walk with different people - and firm friendships have developed as a result. All walks were supplemented by a well deserved lunch break.

Whether be it a picnic, café or pub, it is the highlight of the day giving the group a chance to get together and chat.

This year we welcomed three new VIPs and one sighted guide. We now have 13 Guides and 11 VIPs.

The programme for 17/18 has commenced and we now enjoy home baking for elevenses!



VITAL

The VITAL group is a group of working age, visually impaired people who meet together regularly for social activities and peer support. During the year 17 people benefitted from the group supported by 10 volunteers. In the last year the group have enjoyed quiz evenings, a trip 10 pin bowling, a visit to the Gretna Outlet shopping village and a Xmas meal get together

Monthly Social

We continue to have a monthly social group, this is held April to September each year and provides a regular opportunity for members to meet and enjoy entertainment in the evening. This year the regular group of 14 people have enjoyed comedians, musicians, variety artists and singers. The group has a wonderful time and regularly comment that “they wish it was very month”.

Community Fundraising

We continue to work hard to diversify our income streams and community fundraising is an important area of fundraising for the Charity. Alongside raising vital unrestricted funds it also helps us raise our profile locally and promote the vital work that we do.

This year we have focused on developing relationships with local businesses which resulted in being selected as our local Co-op's chosen charity of the year. We have also developed a fantastic partnership with Windermere and District Lions, being part of their Classic Car event at Ambleside and the Jingle Bell Jog at Bowness and we look forward to working with them in the future. Finally, our joint venture with St Mark's at Natland and raised us £720 with a Simon and Garfunkel show and we have agreed to work together again on a similar show featuring the music of John Denver in early 2018

This year we have raised:

- £5,500 from events
- £5,564 from street and store collections
- £1,639 from pink elephant site boxes
- £1,883 from Xmas draw and annual quiz
- £412 from home boxes

Friends of Sight Advice South Lakes and Legacy donations

This year 78 Friends of Sight Advice supported the Charity through regular donations totalling £7,564 plus an additional £1,417 of gift aid income.

Receiving legacy donations is a lifeline for local independent charities. During the past 12 months we have received legacy income totalling £1000 from supporters who wanted to remember us in their will. We are very grateful for their kind generosity.

Building Appeal

In September 2016 we moved into our new building, the Bradbury Centre, at 116 Highgate in Kendal following a three year building appeal.

We want to thank all our trust funders, local businesses and individual donors for the generosity of their gifts and our supporters and members of our local community for the time and effort spent helping us to raise the money we needed to purchase and refurbish our building.

Our Building Appeal was launched in July 2013 and we were most grateful to the ACT Foundation for kick-starting our campaign with the promise of a grant of £2000. Sight advice contributed £30,000 from reserves and £32,271 from recent legacies. We were also given help and encouragement from the start by volunteers John and Sally Barker who ran an amazing individual donor campaign.

In early 2016 we identified 116 Highgate, which was then a dental surgery, as a possible building, with a purchase price of £275,000. A generous grant of £100,000 from the Bradbury Foundation helped us to raise the remainder of the funds we needed to buy the property.



Refurbishment began and inevitably builders identified additional works that had to be done including rewiring and substantial work on the roof. Fundraising continued for refurbishment and also the cost of buying new furniture, fittings and IT equipment. In September 2016, our previous rental agreement ended and we moved in to our new centre before the builders had moved out!

The new building enables us to:

- advertise events and activities as we now face directly onto the Kendal's main street. The number of people dropping in to find out about our services has increased
- provide a combined reception area and Sight Advice Centre
- provide a new Family Activity Room
- create a sensory sitting out area at the back of our building
- provide a self-contained IT and digital support room
- provide a self-contained meeting and training room

"It's a wonderful set up – lovely and bright and welcoming"
[Service User March 2017]

Working in Partnership

The services and support offered by Sight Advice South Lakes continues to be enhanced through the partnership working and community links that we have. These partnerships improve the support, service, advice and guidance that local people with visual impairment can access. In addition to the key partnerships below we have also started to develop relationships with local businesses in order to enhance our service offer and also to develop our fundraising.

Garfield Weston Award and Pilotlight

In 2016 Sight Advice submitted an application to be considered for a Garfield Weston Award. After a gruelling application and interview process we were absolutely delighted to be one of 20 charities selected for the award.

The Awards help charities to plan for sustainability, development and growth through a year-long programme. Award winners receive the following benefits:

- a fully funded year working with Pilotlight – an organisation that facilitates experienced and senior business leaders to mentor charities to help them develop and to face the future with confidence.
- revenue funding of £6,500 to support the charity to make the most of the Pilotlight experience and to cover travel expenses to meet with your business mentors in London.
- access to the advice and support of the Garfield Weston Foundation and Pilotlight for any specific needs or issues your charity might have.

The Programme with Sight Advice started in November 2016 and will finish October 2017.

Gateway Group

The group came together as a collaborative in 2012 originally to take advantage of the offer of the Gateway premises at the Captain French Surgery.

It was considered that to make better use of the resource it should be opened up for use by as many charities as reasonable possible. Since that time an online platform has been developed to provide better and safer joined up working – the eHub. A Data Sharing Protocol and Partnership Agreement have also been produced and all core group members are signatories.

In 2016 the Core Group members agreed that the objectives of the collaborative could be better met if the group registered as an independent charity to enable it to apply for grants for staffing, operational costs and further development in its own right. This was completed in March 2017 with each of the Core Group members providing a trustee.

In August 2017 the Gateway Group signed an agreement with South Lakeland District Council to administer their small third sector grant fund on behalf of the council.

Aims and Objectives of the Gateway Group

- to promote the ethos of partnership working amongst the Third Sector organisations, Voluntary Groups and all Statutory Organisations providing information, advice, care and support in South Lakeland.
- to encourage the sharing of good working practices in the Third Sector organisations, Voluntary Groups and statutory organisations providing information, advice care and support in South Lakeland.
- to provide a vehicle for making joint applications for grant funding and bid for collaborative contracts for participating organisations of the Gateway Group.
- to develop and provide a range of shared resources for use by all the participating organisations of the Gateway Group.
- to actively support, encourage and promote charities and volunteer groups working in South Lakeland
- to provide a collective voice for charities and volunteer groups working in South Lakeland.

The Gateway Group provides an infrastructure that enables joined up and safe working; it also provides organisational development support when required

Cumbria Societies for the Blind

A key partnership for us is the membership of Cumbria Societies for the Blind, a consortium of the 5 sight loss charities in Cumbria. Sight Advice South Lakes continues to be the lead organisation for the consortium which brings together 5 local sight loss charities from across Cumbria. The societies all operate as individual charities offering a range of support, services and practical assistance in their local communities to people with sight loss. The consortium provides each society with a stronger voice to campaign, deliver joint services countywide and promote equitable services across Cumbria.

The consortium Development Officer has represented Sight Advice South Lakes at many high level statutory groups established by Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group. The Development Officer continues to work with the consortium to meet its objectives, including:

- Identification of opportunities for delivering county wide contracts and joint funded projects
- Developing a cohesive approach to the issues that face people with visual impairment, develop a partnership approach to work carried out by consortium members
- Ensuring that the Cumbria Strategy is recognised with statutory organisations and local communities and it reflect the views and needs people with visual impairment in Cumbria.

During the last year, with thanks to support from Comic Relief, consortium also empowers individuals or groups of people with visual impairment to challenge issues that they feel passionate about and bring about positive change in their communities. This work has including ensuring that Dual Sensory loss support is available across Cumbria for the next financial year, campaigning for equitable support in eye clinics across Cumbria and working with local bus companies to raise awareness of the needs of visually impaired people.

Low Vision Service

We have also continued to work in partnership with Cumbria County Council and local Optometrists to deliver the Low Vision Service in South Lakeland. This service provides aids, support and advice to people with visual impairment to enable them to lead independent lives. In the year 2016-2017 this has continued to be a county wide service commissioned by Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group. Clinics take place in local communities and offer a multi-disciplinary approach to support. First, people see a Low Vision Optician for prescribed magnification aids and this is followed with an appointment with a Rehabilitation Officer and a member of the Sight Advice Team. During this second appointment people are shown additional aids and equipment such as lighting, talking clocks and other aids to support independent living. The feedback from people attending the clinic is excellent with people receiving a personalised service during each appointment and leaving with advice and aids that meet their individual needs.

“First class treatment would be an understatement – it’s absolutely brilliant”

“I have been tremendously touched and grateful for the network of support that has been offered”

Unfortunately, the Windermere clinic was stopped this year, so we are putting all our energy into the Kendal clinic which we hope will continue with the new South Cumbria and North Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group.



Case Study

Terry had previously suffered a stroke and also started with Age Related Macular Degeneration when he first made contact with Sight Advice. He lost a significant amount of sight and was registered as Sight Impaired. He was also struggling with the recent loss of his wife Daphne.

We were able to give him relevant information about the registration process and other support available at this difficult time. We helped Terry improve the lighting in his home and also access more easy to see equipment. Terry was struggling with his mobility, so we asked the Community Physiotherapy team to give him a white walking stick and also gave information on local community transport.

Terry came to our Low Vision Clinic in Kendal and was loaned some magnification to help him with his correspondence. As Terry became more confident, he joined our Positive Steps group where he learnt about equipment to keep people independent, as well as meeting other people with similar problems. Terry enjoyed their company and then decided to join our Arnside Support Group. With the support of one of our volunteers who took him to the group, he was able to chat to other men and women of similar age and not feel as isolated.

Terry started to receive the local South Lakes Talking Newspaper service so that he could keep in touch with what is going on in his local area, and talking books to give him an interest in the evenings. Terry decided to move to sheltered accommodation in Kendal where he could access more support on site. We have continued to keep in touch with Terry whilst he settles in and he is aware of the support available in the Kendal area.

“I was able to talk about my situation, and the support given was tailored to my individual needs”.



Financial Summary Statements 2016 / 2017

(INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2017

	<i>Unrestricted Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total 31.03.17</i>	<i>Total 31.03.16</i>
	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:				
Donations and legacies	48,138	185,518	233,656	144,365
Charitable activities	11,063	119,751	130,814	137,303
Other trading activities	43,351	1,257	44,608	43,478
Investments	2,114	-	2,114	5,257
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	104,666	306,526	411,192	330,403
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Raising funds:	38,431	1,788	40,219	41,783
Charitable activities	152,022	125,382	277,404	211,435
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	190,453	127,170	317,623	253,218
Net Incoming Resources	(85,787)	179,356	93,569	77,185
Transfers Between Funds	146,033	(146,033)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year and Movement in Funds	60,246	33,323	93,569	77,185
Fund Balances Brought Forward at 1 April 2016	465,768	17,986	483,754	406,569
Fund Balances Carried Forward at 31 March 2017	526,014	51,309	577,323	483,754

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2017

	31 March 2017		31 March 2016	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Fixed Assets		370,315		281,780
Investments		-		5,600
		370,315		287,380
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	6,250		13,436	
Cash at bank and in hand	204,845		186,962	
	211,095		200,398	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	4,087		4,024	
Net current assets		207,008		196,374
Net Assets		577,323		483,754
REPRESENTS BY:-				
General Funds		138,427		156,490
Designated Funds		387,587		309,278
Unrestricted Funds		526,014		465,768
Restricted Funds		51,309		17,986
		577,323		483,754

Reserves policy and financial review

The Trustees have developed a reserves policy that maintains 6 months normal operating costs to cover contingencies that could arise in the coming years.

As at 31st March 2017, the Charity had £526,014 unrestricted reserves of which £370,315 represented fixed assets, and £17,272 will be invested to maintain the Charity's services in 2017/18. This leaves unrestricted reserves of £138,427 which equates to 6 months normal operating costs.

Copies of the full Annual Accounts are available on request by contacting Sight Advice South Lakes.

Our thanks to all those who have funded our work during the year. A full list is available in our Trustees' Report and Financial Statements.

Copies of this annual review are also available in Braille, Audio and E-mail formats

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