

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1165086

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024
FOR
CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Name

Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind

Other Working Name

Croydon Vision

Registered Charity number

1165086

Principal Charity Office

Bedford Hall
72-74 Wellesley Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 2AR

The Trustees serving during the year and to the date of this report were as follows: -

Trustees

Nigel Gooding CBE	- Chair
Richard Wragg	- Vice Chair
Frances Cullen	- Trustee
Kieren Exley	- Trustee
Jamie Henderson	- Trustee
Dhruvin Patel	- Trustee
Swarna Pillai	- Trustee

Chief Executive

Susanette Mansour

Senior Team

Abiodun Obileye	- Transport and Facilities Manager
Anca Sahin	- Project Manager

Independent Examiner

Mark Blackwell ACMA
For and behalf of M H R Consultancy Limited
Chartered Management Accountants
Ferneberga House
Alexandra Road
Farnborough
GU14 6DQ

Principal Bankers

Natwest Bank
Croydon Whitgift Centre Branch
40 Whitgift Centre
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 1UQ

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

The Trustees present their annual report together with the unaudited financial statements of Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts on pages 36 and 37 and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Croydon Vision is a charitable incorporated organisation constituted on 8th January 2016 and registered with the Charity Commission on that date. However, the organisation itself has been supporting the blind and visually impaired community for over 100 years. In July 1923, a few visionaries decided to branch out of The Croydon Guild Social Services because it offered limited social activities for people with sight loss. The name of their new organisation was Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind. Its aim was to promote the welfare of the blind people in Croydon.

The formation of the CIO was set up because of the merger with Bedford Hall, to become one entity. Furthermore, to restructure the governance of the Charity and convert from an unincorporated trust to a CIO. On 1st May 2017, all the activities and undertakings of Croydon Vision (registered charity number 200482) were merged with this Charity. Croydon Vision (registered charity number 200482) was removed from the register of charities on 16th November 2017.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees

The Charity's constitution states that the number of Trustees shall not be less than three and not more than eight plus the Chair (9). At least two of the Trustees should; if possible, be members who are visually impaired with skills set that complement the Board. The Board is currently undergoing a recruitment process for a possible Treasurer and General Trustee role. There is a desire to recruit sight loss individuals to the Board with skills and drive to transform more lives.

At every annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the Charity's Trustees shall retire from office. If the number of Charity Trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office, but if there is only one Charity Trustee, he or she shall retire. The Charity Trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any Trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot.

The Charity Trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new Charity Trustee, whether in place of a Charity Trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional Charity Trustee, provided that the limit on the number of Charity Trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Trustees who retire by rotation are eligible for reappointment. A Charity Trustee who has served for two consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a third consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of one year.

Induction and training of new Trustees

There's been no new Trustees for this year, however, over the past few years, the Charity has attracted new Trustees from governmental agencies, legal and business industry. Trustees are involved in various appropriate training to further strengthen their role. A Register of Interests for Trustees, Staff and Volunteers is in place and updated annually. Each Trustee has a champion role, to drive positive change and sustainability of the Charity long term.

Each Trustee undertakes an induction process, consisting of the following: meet and greet the team and understand our culture, Trustee welcome pack which contains policies, procedures, and H&S processes. In addition, Trustees are provided a copy of the CIO's constitution and any amendments made to it and a copy of the CIO's latest Trustees' annual report and financial statements. This is to ensure that Trustees carry out their responsibilities effectively; guided by advice provided from the Charity Commission.

Board members are encouraged to spend half a day at the Charity to further understand the operational aspect of the organisation. Furthermore, an annual event calendar is shared with Trustees with encouragement to attend events. At each board meeting, financial and operational information is supplied together with suitable explanations, including front line presentation at Board meetings. Board members are expected to be aware of the various Charity Commission publications that can be obtained to assist them with their duties as Trustees.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees administers the Charity and generally meets every 12 weeks. A People's Committee is also setup, and various task and finish groups are formed based on needs.

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The current Chief Executive is Susanette Mansour; appointed (2018) by the Trustees. There's been a huge step-change at Croydon Vision. A dynamic new team (volunteers and staff), a defined culture and a new organisational outlook that embraces the ethos of 'Heart of a Charity and Mindset of a Business' are visible every day. Each change has been a step in the long-term plan for transformation, adding extra strength to the solid foundations, which allows Croydon Vision to fail forward and grow with purpose. Susanette Mansour will be stepping down as Chief Executive from effect, December 2024. The Board is currently recruiting her successor, with the hope to appoint by end of September 2024.

Leadership

Leadership and decision making of the Charity is delegated to the Chief Executive by the Board of Trustees. The Chief Executive works closely with Management, staff, and volunteers to fulfil the Charity's objectives and ensure the smooth and effective running of the organisation. The Chief Executive reports to the Chair and to the Board of Trustees.

The CEO and Management team comprise the key management personnel of the Charity in charge of leading or managing the running and operating the Charity on a day-to-day basis.

All Trustees give of their time freely and no trustee received remuneration in the year. One of our Trustees (Frances Cullen) leads an activity at Croydon Vision and charges the organisation at a substantially reduced rate. Details of Trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed on pages 39 and 40 in Notes 9 and 13 of the accounts.

Croydon Vision has fully embraced generational diversity whereby feedback and appraisals are tailored to individual needs rather than just an annual process. The pay structure of staff focuses on staff KPIs (key Performance Indicator), based on a collaborative performance rather than simply focused on individual performance. In view of the nature of the Charity, it is the Trustees responsibility to benchmark against pay levels within the voluntary sector across London as well as the public sector; with some consideration of NJC pay scales.

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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Volunteers

Croydon Vision's Volunteers are simply awesome! At Croydon Vision when we refer to Team, it encompasses both volunteers and staff. With that in mind, having the right Volunteer Liaison Officer in post is super helpful to drive our focus on teamwork and development of volunteering at Croydon Vision. Building on Co-producing; an important pillar at Croydon Vision. The **Volunteer Liaison Officer** works alongside the team to deliver the three volunteering strands: Classic Volunteering, Skill Up and Route to Employment, laser focused in creating a roadmap of **Movement to Empower**.



There are 50 volunteers that give many hours of their time to the Charity. Our social value from April to March 2024 was a whopping **£83,922** – amazing support from our Volunteers, including Trustees. The increase on social value, compared to last year was mainly due to weekly excursions (The Motability Project) as well as our centenary celebrations, more hands to support events.

The Trustees and Staff Team would like to record their thanks to all volunteers, for their valuable support. Croydon Vision celebrates volunteers daily/weekly and then annually. We try and bring volunteers together; this can be a challenge as many work different days. However, our grand annual event, 6th June 2024 was a great success, the turnout was amazing, and we celebrated our volunteers in style, with gifts, tributes and a delicious meal.

“Thank-you so much for spoiling us at the Celebrating Volunteers event, it was very much appreciated. The gifts are lovely and so thoughtful. Croydon Vision is a super organisation, and I am very proud to be a volunteer” **Sue L, Volunteer**.

Bharat has a strong belief that as human beings helping out is important, so that’s what he and his fellow volunteers do. Volunteer’s Week showcased the work they do, which felt great.

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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Volunteers

Theo thought it was really special few days. He felt a bigger appreciation, which was rewarding for him.

Jordan felt really happy at the end of Volunteers Week. Members and Staff showing their appreciation made him feel good.

Mohamed found that Volunteers Week made him feel like CV really cared about him as an individual. He was glad to be involved, and it made me feel special, especially since this was the first time he's been involved in a Volunteers Week.

We love to see the journey of progress, members getting the support they need and later on, becoming volunteers (giving back). An example of this is below:

"I work as an assistant to the Office Manager. I initially came to Croydon Vision for help, to apply for PIP. I was hesitant to get involved with Croydon Vision, I wasn't sure it was for people my age and I was struggling to accept being part of the sight loss community at the time. Then I spoke with the Employment Advisor about volunteering. She helped me with my CV and enticed me to come to the Croydon Vision careers fair, which was so good. I looked at the role of receptionist and thought 'this is me!' After putting a lot of work into my application I got the role, and I love it. I now wake up thinking 'I love to go work', which is obviously so good for my mental health. I am elated to work for such an honourable charity, who advocate for people like me and I love that it makes me feel helpful!" **Kai - Member & Volunteer.**

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of our Trustees received remuneration from their work with the Charity as Trustees. However, one Trustee leads an activity at Croydon Vision and charges the organisation at a substantially reduced rate. Any connection between a Trustee, CEO or Management of the Charity with any service user, external contractor or supplier of services must be disclosed to the CEO or Board of Trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Croydon Vision's objectives and funding limit the services we provide to those detailed in our charitable objectives. The Charity's Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission. Our primary beneficiaries are those people with sight loss or individuals with an interest in sight loss.

OUR CULTURE:

We put **People First**
We **Empower our People**, on the journey to independence.
We take great pride in our **Vibrant Community**.

OUR VALUES

Awareness: We invest... In a growth mindset.
Compassion: We put... People first
Teamwork: We build... More together
Integrity: We keep... Our promises.
Diversity: We stand... Shoulder to shoulder.

INTRODUCING OUR WHY, HOW and WHAT we do...

OUR VISION, PURPOSE: Why we do what we do.
Creating a community that protects sight and reducing mild to severe sight loss for the next 100yrs.

OUR MISSION: What we do
We're here to encourage independence, confidence, and personal development among our blind and partially sighted community. Encouraging people in Croydon to re-evaluate what's possible – because there is life after sight loss.

OUR 5 STEP MODEL: How we do this (Personal development):
We have a five-step process because we believe that transformation is a journey...

Stage 1 – Rebuilding:
Connecting with our vibrant community, Advice & Advocacy, counselling, peer support and active well-being.

Stage 2 – Re-direction:
Walk alongside each person, on their journey to design an individualised plan of action.

Stage 3 – Upskilling:
Improving social mobility through education, technology, and digital inclusion.
Providing coaching, mentorship, and intergenerational activities; power of learning and sharing together.

Stage 4 – Applying Knowledge:
Volunteering opportunities, route into work, reviewing CVs, mock interviews, business planning and more.

Stage 5 – From Survival to Thriving:
Employment or entrepreneurship, becoming an ambassador, a change agent for sight loss.

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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES - continued

Empowering Croydon Vision means empowering the sight loss community.

We have over 100 years of experience at Croydon Vision, which gives us an innate understanding that the needs and experiences of those we seek to empower are constantly changing. As a result, we are focused on:

1. Shifting the **societal narrative** for people with sight loss, from help to empowerment.
2. Enabling and emboldening the sight loss community to **improve their own lives**.
3. Utilising our **land and buildings** to the best effect for our community.
4. Acting on our **strategy 2023-26**, to improve our transport solutions and organise more trips for members.
5. Continuing to transform the lives of all within four distinct categories:
 - a. **Young People (3 -18 years old)** - laying the foundations for a rich, full life, by offering activities like cookery workshops and technology training.
 - b. **Working Age (19 years plus)** - facilitating routes into employment and entrepreneurship; encouraging innovation, IT training and introducing new technology.
 - c. **Over 65s** - embedding our live well, age well attitude by offering wellbeing classes, dance, creative activities, and excursions.
 - d. **All ages** - connecting generations to enjoy activities together, volunteering, sharing knowledge, experiences, and perspectives.
6. Working successfully **with other organisations** in Croydon and the sight loss space.
7. Recruiting **the right staff and volunteers**, who want to serve and make a difference.

Croydon Vision over the past 100 years...

1931: Funds were raised to buy Bedford Park, the land on which Bedford Hall trust was built.

1979: Bedford Hall was sold to developers, allowing new and larger premises to be bought at 72-74 Wellesley Road.

1982: Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind to greet members with warmth and humility.

2015: Members voted on a proposal, to merge Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (CVAB) and Bedford Hall Trust into one entity. The newly merged organisation was named Croydon Vision to promote inclusion for all.

2018: New focus was established on organisational development - refining, adjusting and evolving Croydon Vision to transform and advance. The value of our resources was maximised, including employees, volunteers, finances, technology, and physical assets.

2021: A partnership between Croydon Vision and Moorfields Eye Hospital was established to promote a community-led approach to assisting people with sight loss and creating a more holistic way of working with members. Another by Croydon Vision and Age UK.

2023: The organisation's centenary marked a new era, including the launch of a plan that will cement financial sustainability for Croydon Vision, for the next 100 years.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE



A Snapshot of our 100 years celebration



CENTENARY COUNTDOWN:

1489 people reached to raise Eye Health Awareness

78 people attended our celebrating volunteers event (June)

121 attended our Centenary BBQ (July)

183 people joined us at our Gala Dinner (Oct)

110 people celebrated Christmas with us, much fun!

To top it all in 2023, we received the **Kings Award** for Voluntary service, much fun!



Testimonials:

"Thank you so much for the course. You did a brilliant job explaining what it means to be visually impaired, I learnt so much"

- **Paul, volunteer**

"Thank you very much for a wonderful Centenary Gala Dinner. Well done for organising such a great event!"

- **Ines, member**

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE - continued

BIG Lottery – The Lost 500 (Year 2 of Project) – April to March 2024.

Reaching our Community:

FROM SURVIVAL TO THRIVING

3 gained new employment.

11 retained their employment through upskilling and business advise.

72 people were provided visual awareness workshops by us.

83 local business hosted, raising awareness of sight loss.

UPSKILLING

40 working age members provided with intensive readiness for work programme.

169 accessible tech sessions provided.

351 attended cookery sessions, promoting a 'can do'.

REBUILDING LIVES

180 counselling sessions provided for members, promoting well being.

1065 members (24% increase from 2022-23).

£254,803 was generated through Advice & Advocacy, supporting our members to have more money and control over their finances.



APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

7 members became volunteers (give back)

£83,922 is the whopping total of social value by volunteers.

REDIRECTING LIVES

255 people attended excursions (177 last year)

1266 transport trips for our members, promoting inclusion.

2869 lunches were served to our members (2527 in 2022-23).



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE - continued

Motability Project to feature – Year 1 impact

Motability - Year 1

(Dec to Nov 2023)

- Improve community transport and increase community activities through excursions.
- Reach the whole of Croydon for people living with the disability of sight loss and sometimes other complex health conditions.
- Provide community transport to other VCS (disability) in Croydon; 4 per annum.

What we achieved:

Increased reach, people with sightloss by **12%** compared to previous year.

5 community organisations supported this year, opportunities for new experiences.

110 people at summer BBQ - we had 4 vehicles out and many more in attendance.

180 people attended our centenary gala dinner - Vehicles and drivers made the evening a smooth one.

Celebrated our Kings Award in grand style - more members attended using our transport service

Testimonials:

"I have only started coming to Croydon Vision most recently, using the transport service. What I have seen here is amazing. The organisation and staff are very helpful." - **B.M**



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE - continued

Children & Young People Project - Impact

"I had an exceptional experience with Ayeza as she consistently demonstrated a friendly approach, making it easy for the kids to connect with her. She has a remarkable ability to understand and cater to the unique needs of each child, ensuring that everyone feels included and engaged. Additionally, the transport arrangements were seamless and well-coordinated, making each outing stress-free. Beyond the fun, she also provided valuable educational sessions, including interactive science lessons and practical skills like learning how to type." (CV parent).

Our Children & Young People

Most children living in deprivation, with sight loss are unable to access mainstream activities, our services are designed to level the playing field.

Workshops and activities are focused on building self-esteem, independence and confidence. Boosting social and communication skills. Making new friends, shared experiences and challenges.



Our activities:

- Cookery
- Reading Workshops
- Travelling Independently
- Tech Training
- Career Workshops
- Virtual Groups
- Peer Support

What we've achieved:

Over **80** workshops organised
180 attendance
We encourage siblings and friends to join our activities.

Testimonials:

"I had an amazing time with Ayeza at Crystal Palace park" - **Phoebe, member**

"We learn so much, but we are also having fun"
- **Abia, member**

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE - continued

Working Age Project - Impact

Working Age The Impact

1 in 4 people living with sight loss are employed with ongoing barriers.

Why we want to do this:

Improve **inclusion** of people with sight loss.
To **transform** lives, on the journey to independence.

What we've achieved:

9 members helped to retain work

12 members helped to continue their studies

26 members attending the Working Age Group

33 members in employment

57 members in upskilling or coaching

292 members contacted in total

Testimonials:

"I was in a state of panic and confusion when I found out I was at risk of losing my job. As if by fate, I was contacted by Croydon Vision. I was taken aback by the willingness to help me. Daniel suggested writing a supporting letter to my employer, informing them about the available support mechanisms in place to assist me. Rather than termination, I was given a more accommodating role for my disability. I am very grateful to Croydon Vision!" - **A.K.**



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Preventable Sight Loss Impact – Eyes wide open campaign, Community outreach, Visual awareness workshops

Strategic Objective - Preventable Sight Loss



Eyes Wide Open Campaign

Our Eyes Wide Open Campaign was born from the idea of 100 glasses to represent our centenary. Supporting young people in Uganda. This initiative went cross sector and thanks to the Croydon community.

1600+ (2023 - 1400+)

Community Outreach

Preventable sight loss is one of our strategic aims. We are actively engaging with our community, raising awareness of sight loss, reaching new members as well as promote a 'Give Back' campaign to recruit volunteers.

2019 (2023 - 938)



Visual Awareness Workshops



Our Visual Awareness Workshops form a part of our inclusion campaign. It generate income for the organisation by providing workshops to schools, universities and businesses etc. The aim is to smash taboos about sight loss, developing confidence for people to better understand visual impairment.

13 (2023 - 9)

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Service Impact Sept to Aug 2024



Lunch

Our Chef provides an awesome service, freshly cooked meals, Monday to Thursday - We believe in Eat, Live and Age Well.

3585

(2023 - 2795)

Membership Growth

We welcomed 30% more members into our vibrant community. This means we've reached more people, raised greater awareness and made a meaningful impact on more lives.

1125

(2023 - 857)



Counselling

Our counselling session is part of our rebuilding stage (step one). We provide vital emotional support for individuals living with sight loss, helping them navigate challenges and improve well-being.

193

(2023 - 128)

Advice & Advocacy

£166,469 was generated for 29 members through Advice and Advocacy, giving them more money or control over their finances. This was lower than last year; £201,021 for 37 individuals. However, more people 156 in total, accessed other A&A services such as general advice.



Excursions

We love experiencing new places and by offering more excursions for our members, they travel much more and get involved in the community, making new memories and building friendships.

769

(2023 (4mths only) - 177)

Cookery

Our cookery class equipped 31% more members to live more independently by engaging in cookery sessions. Forming friendships and giving them the opportunity to enjoy cooking, using accessible equipment.

309

(2023 - 235)



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Celebrating our Success



A photo from our wonderful Kings Award Garden Party.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Our values are the key to true success

Hemla, Volunteer Liaison Officer: Croydon Vision is community-driven above all. This means delivering support, inclusion, advocacy and providing services and resources to enhance our members' lives. Our commitment to raising **awareness** about visual impairments will help us to foster a more inclusive society. During my time here I've observed how inclusive it is, welcoming a **diverse** range of volunteers, members and staff. We use **teamwork** to take a proactive approach to advocate for the needs of our members.

Clara, Marketing and Engagement Officer: I identify strongly with the values here at Croydon Vision, which do resonate with my personal beliefs and inspire me to contribute positively and meaningfully to our community. We are a **close-knit team**, with everyone supporting and helping each other. I think this is the aspect of Croydon Vision that I like and admire the most.

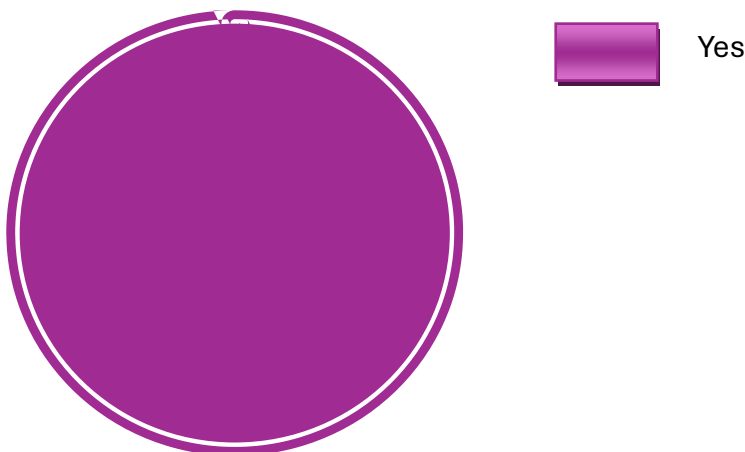
Ayeza, Children and Young People Officer: At CV, our core values are fundamental to our culture and guide our interactions with both members and with each other. **Awareness** and **integrity** ensure we handle every interaction with honesty and a deep **understanding** of others' needs. **Compassion** shapes our approach to various situations, allowing us to provide the best support and care.

Diversity is clearly reflected in our membership, staff, and volunteers, and means we have a range of perspectives and experiences that enhance our community. **Teamwork** is central to Croydon Vision's success, enabling us to achieve significant impact over time. Perhaps the greatest strength of our team lies in our ability to **come together** to overcome challenges and achieve our goals. Our culture fosters an inclusive and supportive environment, where individuals can transition from merely surviving to truly thriving. We are a **strong team** that consistently **collaborates** to ensure success in all endeavours. Additionally, everyone feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential, contributing to the overall mission and vision of Croydon Vision.

Ancella George, Working Age/Employment Advisor: Our values are an integral part of the work we do. Without a combination of all these values, our members would not be getting what they have signed up for. Working **together** as a team further enhances productivity and encourages growth amongst the staff. Our values encourage resilience, hard work and wisdom, to help us to overcome any challenges that may arise. I applaud our team for working in collaboration for the betterment of our community and for empowering individuals with sight loss.

Our latest survey gave us time to celebrate what's working as well as discuss areas for improvement. This was reviewed at our most recent bright ideas day – synopsis below:

Do you feel a sense of belonging at CV?



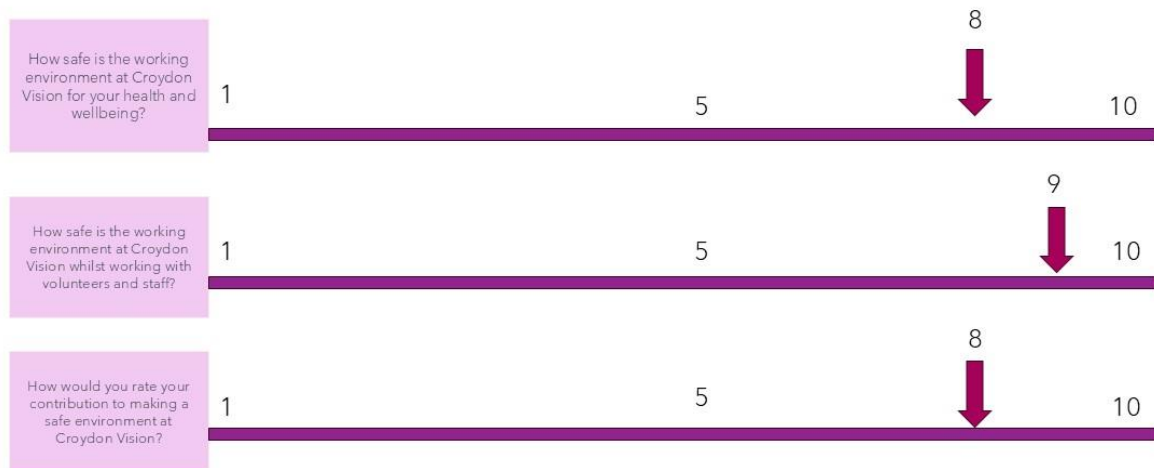
100% of people said YES

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

TEAMWORK



WORKING ENVIRONMENT



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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

The journey from membership to Volunteering (Giving back):

“Croydon Vision has changed my life. I was in trouble in December when I almost committed suicide but had a chance meeting with Shalini at a bus stop. She told me about Croydon Vision and encouraged me to come. Since, then I have attended lots of activities, and I have made some good friends. Now I am a volunteer, and I support other members as well as forming new friendships. I can proudly say CV has changed me for the better.” Paul, H. (Member and Volunteer).

How Andrew L and CV help each other...

On Friday 10th August 2012, at around 8am, Andrew’s life changed forever. He’d just put his 4-year-old son on his shoulder, carried him downstairs and opened the front door to go out for the day. The next thing he knew he was at St George’s Hospital with no vision, after having had a massive stroke. He shares his experience since then and how he and Croydon Vision have come to help each other...

Saying goodbye to a job he loved.

With 4 children and 11 grandchildren, Andrew is a busy man with a full life. But since losing his vision over a decade ago, he’s had to find new ways to feel useful. In the days and months following his stroke some of Andrew’s central vision returned, though he still felt as though he was looking through a periscope. His job as a long-distance lorry driver - which he loved - meant the DVLA had to assess his sight at Moorfields. “I’ll never forget when the visual field test came back,” remembers Andrew, “30% or less and you lose your licence and the guy doing the test just said, “I’m so sorry, you’re at 10%.” He looked absolutely heartbroken for me. I knew my sight was bad, but I couldn’t believe that number was so low.”

Being told to ‘enjoy retirement’. As well as driving lorries in Europe, Andrew had experience on building sites and in carpentry. Even though he had some sight, insurance wouldn’t cover him for that sort of work anymore. “I went to the job centre and said, ‘I’ll do anything’ but the guy there just said, ‘You enjoy your retirement’. I experienced depression following that, I like to be useful.”

Discovering Croydon Vision.

The number of staff at Croydon Council has been greatly reduced in recent years, so when Andrew was recommended Croydon Vision as a place that could help with his PIP, he couldn’t believe how quick we were to react. “Croydon Vision has now helped me win two court appeals connected to the benefits I’m entitled to.” Andrew explains, “Everyone on the team is there for you and trust me we all need that, even if we’re too proud to ask for it sometimes.”

Asking ‘What can I do for Croydon Vision?’

Following the help he got from CV, Andrew asked himself ‘What can I do for Croydon Vision?’. He serves as the Permanent Charity Steward for Lavender Hill 3191 Fellowships, so when he heard CV needed a defibrillator, he spoke to another Fellowship who owns a medical equipment supply company.

Andrew had intended to pay for it himself, but his Fellowship insisted on donating the machine (which usually costs £2,000) and covering the cost of the training too. Andrew is a big fan of Shalini’s cooking (she is our Cooking Lead and Outreach Officer), so he also arranged the donation of a new chest freezer and £100 of cooking equipment. “It felt really good,” Andrew enthused, “though I don’t do things for the glory, it gives me purpose - and having nothing to do is so frustrating.”

What Croydon Vision gives Andrew...

Just being at Croydon Vision is important to Andrew and members like him, “It breaks up time when you’d otherwise be sitting at home in the dark, just waiting for company, which can be so depressing,” he explains. If Andrew could click his fingers, he says he’d love to get us our new building. “It would give people a life-changing hub where they can come together and just do more.” Knowing Andrew, he’s the type to help us make it happen! – Andrew (Member and Volunteer).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Kings Award Garden Party Celebrations

In May we were delighted to celebrate being awarded The Kings Award with everyone who forms our vibrant community. We spoke to a few of the members who were in attendance, about the memories they'll never forget from this special day.



A photo of Esther smiling and arranging bright flowers for the celebration.

Abiodun was struck by the happiness that filled the air, "When we come together at Croydon Vision, it is a happy union. Everyone is happy, they gave us food, drink, flowers at the Garden Party it was so beautiful."

Heather loved the way we filled the hall with flowers, "I walked into the most beautiful room of white tablecloths and beautiful blue glasses in a circle on the table and the stage was a riot of fresh flowers and a beautiful archway of flowers. The room was filled with fresh flowers on every table. They smelt beautiful and we enjoyed being shown how to make bouquets."

Mrs Samuel loved how sociable it was, "The food was good, and it was also special being with my friends at the Garden Party."

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Services - Our social groups, held at Bedford Hall on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays are lively occasions, where people can share stories, experiences and laughs too. We also run lots of activities including drama, cooking, quizzes and keep fit. A few members tell us what it's like to join in:

"I have glaucoma, I like to go to keep fit and I really benefit from the excursions. Because I'm on my own I appreciate the company."
Kaye

"I recently had a stroke so coming here for the exercise and stretching is very beneficial. I have a very bad back, so it helps it. I also come for the dancing with two canes, and I move myself!" **Pearl**

"Croydon Vision is very good for my mental health. If you're around others the same as you - you don't feel so alone." **Isaac**

"As Muhammad has been attending activities and workshops regularly at CV, we have noticed great improvements in his social interaction and energy! He interacts more with his siblings, and we've seen an increase in his vocabulary. He's picked up new words from his peers at CV during games such as articulate and Ker-Plunk!" **Parent of one of our younger members.**

"I live alone in my flat, so when I come to Croydon Vision I relax. Without this place life would be boring." **Abiodun**

How technology becomes a game changer!

A member had a one-to-one meeting with our Employment Advisor and was then referred to the Accessible Tech Trainer:

"I was studying until I became visually impaired, and I found it hard to continue. Due to the advances in technology and deterioration of my vision, I decided to suspend my studies. I came to Croydon Vision to upskill and also to gain knowledge about the technologies that can help me. So, I started to attend tech sessions with the ATT, and I still do it regularly. The knowledge I gained from the sessions not only gave me the confidence to continue my studies, but also allowed me to pursue employment opportunities. Every time I attend a session it feels that both my computer skills and knowledge have improved". AS (Working Age Member)

Another example:

A member still in employment met our **Member Liaison Officer (MLO)** and was introduced to CV, he was complaining about struggling with reading printed documents. The member was then referred by the MLO to the **Accessible Tech Trainer (ATT)** who offered him a tour of our Resource Centre, and he was recommended to get new gadgets to aid him with his work struggles.

The member says: "It has changed my whole work life; I find myself doing my tasks faster than I was previously able to. I also received training and tech support from Croydon Vision (CV) on how to make full use out of my iPad. With the skills I gained I am now able to work way effectively, and I am now able to get most of my work done in the office and not having to carry it home. I am grateful for the support that the ATT, MLO and CV has given me." DC (Working Age Member).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

This year, a key focus was on people with sight loss maintaining and progressing within employment. Through this, we can develop leaders with lived experience of sight loss who will lead the inclusive workplaces of tomorrow.

A Case Study:

Beginning of 2024, a survey was conducted at CV for the working age members, which is when we contacted EB. We found out that EB was facing the threat of losing her job due to difficulties in accessing her tasks effectively. Despite her capabilities, she was worried she may lose her job. Her employer had concerns about her productivity and was unsure on how to support her. The situation was dire, with the employee facing the possibility of unemployment, coupled with emotional and financial strain.

Recognising the importance of workplace inclusivity and the potential of the visually impaired employee, we intervened by drafting and providing a supporting letter to the employer. This letter highlighted the availability of support services such as Access to Work, emphasizing how these resources could enable the employee to overcome barriers and continue contributing effectively within the organisation. Additionally, the ATT facilitated the communication between the employee and her employer, advocating for reasonable adjustments within work and a reconsideration of her role within the company.

CV's intervention resulted in a positive outcome. The employer decided to explore alternative solutions that would enable EB to remain a valuable member of the team. Consequently, the employee was offered a different role within the organisation—one that aligned better with her abilities and allowed for reasonable accommodations to be made. This new role not only preserved her employment but also provided her with a renewed sense of belonging within the company.

As a result of this intervention, the future looks brighter for both the member and the organisation. By prioritising inclusivity and making accommodations for diverse needs, the company fostered a culture of acceptance and equality in the workplace. The visually impaired employee, now empowered with the necessary support, can thrive in her new role, leveraging her skills and contributing meaningfully to the organisation's objectives. Moreover, this success story sets a precedent for future instances where employees with disabilities require accommodations, fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment for all. Ultimately, this case serves as a testament to the transformative power of advocacy and collaboration in championing accessibility and diversity in the workplace.

"I was in a state of both panic and confusion. When I found out I was at risk of losing my job. When Croydon Vision contacted me, I initially, I thought nothing of it until I was asked about employment. I then explained my situation to Daniel, the IT trainer. I was taken aback by his willingness to help me. He suggested writing a supporting letter to my employer, informing them about the available support mechanisms in place to assist me. I was very pleased that I was able to receive such quick support from Croydon Vision. With the information contained in the letter, my employer reassessed their previous decision. Rather than termination, I was given a more accommodating role for my disability. I am very grateful for Daniel and Croydon Vision's aid. I will be attending other activities that go on there." EB

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Croydon Vision is needed more than ever before.

THE NOW and FUTURE: There are 10,500 people with sight loss in Croydon (2022), this means **1 in 37** people living with some form of visual impairment. By 2032, it is projected to increase by 21% which equate to 12,700 living with sight loss.

In order to provide the most support, make the most difference and be a force for good in our area, it is crucial that we understand the complexity of societal issues at work. As we write this, Croydon Council are £1.6 billion in debt, impacting the Voluntary Sector with a massive cutback of £2.6m, this reduction in funds had a significant impact on residents in need of accessing local services.

Cost of living:

The demand for services continues to rise nationwide. Locally, the voluntary sector is struggling to fully meet needs due to financial cuts by the council, as well as higher demands on trusts and foundation, causing huge delays on awards/responses. Life is a concern for many people, due to the rise in utility bills versus option to eating well. There's an increase in anxiety, a fall in living standards which impacts physical and mental wellbeing. Our members are experiencing the impact of sight loss and lack as majority live in the most deprived areas.

In Croydon, there seems to be a cycle of social dependence, some working age members opting to stay on social benefit rather than taking up employment. The system seems more favourable to claim benefits, instead of encouraging employment, sometimes, due to the complexity of welfare application. Another continued issue is Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), access to work takes 5-9 months from initial assessment for someone in work, to them receiving an award for accessible equipments. As a result, sometimes, employers are discouraged to employ people with sight loss because the lack of equipments can affect day to day business. In some cases, employees have raised an alarm that reasonable adjustment wasn't in place, escalating to tribunal claims.

Some contexts on poverty and health within our community:

- The unemployment rate in Croydon is 8% (nationally that same number is 4.9%).
- 71% of our members have severe sightloss, residing in the areas of highest deprivation and lowest income in the Borough.
- 29% of Croydon Vision members have an additional disability - either a physical/learning disability and/or a long-term health condition and/ or mental health illness.

Statistics like these demand action. We want to see change happen for people with sight loss, levelling the playing field and transforming lives from dependence to independence.

Nationally - there are more than 2 million people in the UK living with sight loss.

- Every day 250 people start to lose their sight.
- 340,000 people are registered blind or partially sighted in the UK.
- There are now more than 26,000 visually impaired children in the UK, and around half of them have an additional special educational need or disabilities.
- Nearly 80% of the people registered as blind or partially sighted in the UK are 65 or older, and around 60% are 75+.
- Well over half of people currently living with sight loss are women.

Zooming in on Croydon...

The Croydon borough has certainly seen its fair share of upheaval in recent years. It is the second-largest London Borough, with more than 51% of the population identifying as coming from a BAME background.

- Black African and Caribbean people are four to eight times more at risk of developing certain forms of glaucoma.
- The risk of diabetic eye disease is around three times greater in South Asian people due to diabetes retinopathy.
- There is also evidence that people from ethnic minority backgrounds experience barriers to accessing eye health care, which will increase their risk of avoidable sight loss.

Service demand continues to increase, including people with sight loss:

- 10,500 people are estimated to be living with sight loss in Croydon today.
- 1,825 people are registered blind or partially sighted.
- By 2032 it is projected that 12,700 people in Croydon will be living with sight loss.

The current sight loss stats by age:

- 190 are aged 0 to 17 years.
- 2,500 are aged 18 to 64 years.
- 1,930 are aged 65 to 74 years.
- 2,640 are aged 75 to 84 years.
- 3,240 are aged 85 years and over.

FUTURE PLANS

Year one of three years - Strategy 2023-26

We want to welcome many more people to our vibrant community, from mild to severe impairment, providing vital services through a new bespoke centre that is forward thinking, inclusive and multi-functional (bricks and clicks). A building that is self-sustainable for the next 100yrs, driven by our model, heart of a charity and mindset of a business.

Our strategy will focus on preventative work (avoidable sight loss), whilst providing practical support to transform lives and developing a culture of giving back to the community.

EMBRACING DISCOMFORT: Our strategy has discomfort, simply because we know we do not have all the answers. There is strength in that. We'll need that strength to challenge the status quo. We're breaking free from perfection in this strategy, which we're not seeing as a plan so much as a set of choices that collectively position our organisation.

With that in mind, our strategy focuses on creating a sustainable advantage through cost management and team capabilities, to deliver superior returns, both financially, and socially for our people.

Embracing aspiration: We envision reaching every person in Croydon experiencing sight loss, developing stronger networking links, educating people about eye health, transforming lives, and giving back to the community.

Igniting a culture shift: Our model will focus on preventing sight loss, smashing taboos and laser-focused on transformational work; to deliver hope that there is life after sight loss.

Unlocking the circle of giving: Practical support will lead to transforming the lives of people living with sight loss, who will in turn be empowered to embrace giving back to their community, utilising their skills and experiences, promoting a more intergenerational model.

Building resilience: Our target of £7.5 million represents a bold declaration of intent for the next 100 years. We want to deliver financial sustainability by building a multi-functional centre of excellence that leverages the power of bricks (physical) and clicks (virtual) to serve our community.

Driven by our Purpose: We put People First. We Empower our people, on the journey to independence. We take great pride in our Vibrant Community. These crystal-clear statements underpin everything we hope to achieve.

Prioritising our Ambitious Goals.

At Croydon Vision our focus remains on transforming lives, promoting independence, and giving back. We aim to remain consistent on these points through three clear planning priorities:

1. PREVENTION OF SIGHT LOSS

Reaching our community, meeting with thought leaders, businesses, educational establishments, healthcare, and other care providers, to ensure important messaging about eye health is understood by all. When so many eye conditions are preventable but not treatable, doing anything less would simply not align with our values.

2. PRACTICAL SUPPORT USING OUR 5-STEP MODEL (Surviving to Thriving)

Please see page 6 of this report, giving a detailed synopsis of our 5-step model.

3. PHASE 3 - BUILDING TO SUSTAIN THE NEXT 100 YEARS

We're determined to incorporate sustainability into all areas of our operation. Key to this is driving forward with our vision to create a new, purpose-led building that will:

- facilitate greater engagement with the community,
- open up more opportunities for an increased proportion of the borough's sight loss community.
- deliver long-term financial sustainability for the organisation and beneficiaries.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Measuring our Impact.

Much has been achieved in 100 years, but there is more to be done. As we enter our next 100 years we are focusing on:

Tackling preventable sight loss.

We are focused on improving eye health and reducing avoidable sight loss in our community. We are doing this by engaging with:

- Local businesses > Targeting campaigns to disseminate information.
- Local media > Sharing campaigns through press releases including for local residents.
- Local schools > Creating downloadable resources for schools, colleges, and universities in our surrounding area.
- Local organisations > Increasing engagement so we can share knowledge.

KPIs

- To scale up awareness of avoidable sight loss and reach 25 local businesses by YE24, 50 local businesses by YE25 and 100 local businesses by YE26.
- To launch 2 media campaigns each year YE24, YE25 and YE26.
- Connect and build relations with 5 schools by YE24, 10 local schools by YE25 and 15 local schools by YE26.
- Adding 5 new organisations each year, including sports facilities, local charities, other sight loss service providers.
- To collaborate with key stakeholders (internal and external), to develop an app for social networking, further raise awareness of sight loss and reach, launching YE25.

Delivering practical transformation using our 5-step model

We will both amplify our commitment to those with severe sight loss and reach out to those with milder visual impairment:

1. Providing a 5-step plan from surviving to thriving.
2. Facilitating opportunities for more outreach activities through our improved transportation.
3. Promoting opportunities for active wellbeing.
4. Offering mentoring opportunities that can be passed down.
5. Delivering technology solutions that can be passed up.
6. Fostering a caring environment that's conducive to sharing.
7. Continuing our commitment to provide support to the 'Lost 500' by expanding our reach to engage with those who live with all forms of visual impairment and have been left without support.

Ways we will engage with and listen to the entire sight loss community:

1. Member questionnaires conducted twice a year.
2. Annual away days to promote group collaboration and discussion.
3. Scale up outreach and taking our work into the community to gauge the needs of those with sight loss who are new to Croydon Vision.
4. Engaging with sight loss leaders who are new to Croydon Vision.

We will be bold about the services we aim to **keep, start, and stop**. This will strengthen our editing bricks and clicks model, which incorporates:

- Lunch service
- Transport solutions
- Children & Young People
- Volunteering
- Routes to Employment
- Online services (clicks)
- New services and facilities through listening to the entire sight loss community.

KPIs:

- Increase membership (all forms of sight loss) from 10% to 50% of the community within the borough by YE26.
- Collaborate and develop a robust plan YE24, to deliver a new building to suit the needs of sight-loss residents in the borough.
- Members advocate and improve accessible branding within businesses, 3 YE24, 7 YE25 and 9 YE26

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

Phase 3 - Building to sustain the next 100yrs.

While we are focused on providing facilities that better meet the needs of all sight-loss members, we have a responsibility to protect the financial interests of Croydon Vision and provide sustainable sources of income. We plan to achieve this by:

- Developing and executing plans for a multi-functioning hub that embodies the heart of a charity, mindset of a business ethos.
- Safeguarding sustainable income delivered through a suite of diverse income streams.
- Making best use of the land we have available with robust and viable plans to invest in new buildings. These will replace existing buildings, which could be deemed unfit for purpose for a sight loss community.

KPIs:

- Increased income targets for YE24, YE25 and YE26 in line with Fundraising Strategy for the period.
- Robust plans by YE24, for a new building to better serve the needs of the sight loss community and factor in:
 - a. Access to funding for the build.
 - b. Improved financial sustainability, post-build.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

PREVENTION OF SIGHT LOSS - YEAR 1

2023-24 brought a mix of opportunities and challenges. The highs, the lows and the in-betweens were evident throughout, and navigating them was both rewarding and exhausting. Leading an organisation through pandemic, a massive period of modernisation and change, as well as cost of living crisis. All in a borough with complex challenges (Croydon Council) and previously, unidentified needs for people with sight loss, a challenge that is still evident, to ensure inclusion and awareness is scaled up.

There's a saying by Jim Rohn that puts things into perspective, **“Don't wish life was easier, wish you were better. Don't wish for less problems, wish for more skills. Don't wish for less challenge, wish for more wisdom”**. The current landscape looks bleak, it comes with many challenges including recent election, the riots, funding. The voluntary sector as a whole is going through turbulence and locally Croydon council is still experiencing hard times. It could well take another 10 years to rebuild. However, amidst all this, there is a growing sense of cautious optimism. 2024-25 will be our best to date. It is the year of fulfilment, and this is spoken with real boldness, in spite of the current challenges we face both nationally and internally - we will come through this.

KPI aspirations	What we achieved so far
To scale up awareness of avoidable sight loss and reach 25 local businesses by YE24, 50 local businesses by YE25 and 100 local businesses by YE26.	Community outreach and engagement increased by 55% compared to last year. We built relationships with 28 businesses, supporting some with visual awareness workshops. Worked with businesses to retain employment for someone with sight loss by providing access to work information to them, most unaware of such provision.
To launch 2 media campaigns each year YE24, YE25 and YE26.	Continued our Eyes Wide Open campaign which for the second-year running was super popular with businesses and the community at large. We collected over 1,600 glasses. The campaign continues to raise the profile of Croydon Vision. Our summer BBQ and Open day, all aimed at increasing awareness of avoidable sight loss. During Eye Health Week, Croydon Vision positioned in all 4 corners of the borough, east, west, north and south, working with an ophthalmologist. A common action by participants: One of the most common reactions during eye health talks are people taking action to book an eye test appointment, mainly because they haven't done so in years, some also are usually unaware of the incentive by their employer.
Connect and build relations with 5 schools by YE24, 10 local schools by YE25 and 15 local schools by YE26.	Our Outreach Officer, Children and Young People Officer collaborated and visited schools in the borough together or with other officers such as the accessible tech trainer. It's been amazing to see young people engaged, asking questions and leaving with knowledge and takeaways they can apply. They find the gadgets super cool. For 2023-24, we reached 7 schools, including Royal Russell, Brit school, Trinity school, Chestnut Primary school etc.
Adding 5 new organisations each year, including sports facilities, local charities, other sight loss service providers.	Our Motability Project enables us to support a number of organisations in Croydon with transport solutions. We smashed our target and provided vital services to over 12 organisations. This enabled us to bring more awareness of service provision and understanding of preventable sight loss. Our CEO Co-Chairs the Southeast and London region for sight loss, influencing and sharing vital knowledge to strengthen the eye sector.
To collaborate with key stakeholders (internal and external), to develop an app for social networking, further raise awareness of sight loss and reach, launching YE25.	This is pending, the idea behind this, to provide an app, a hub space for people with mild and moderate sight loss, a service tailored for their needs, whilst also continuing service provision for people with severe sight loss.

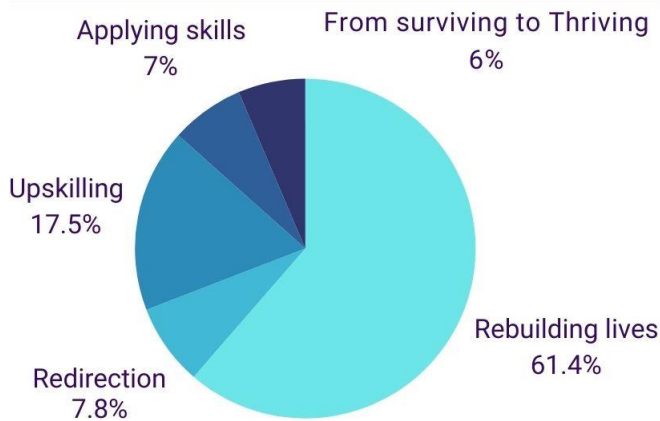
ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

PRACTICAL SUPPORT USING OUR 5-STEP MODEL (Surviving to Thriving)

PROVIDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Since launching our Five Step Model, the uptake by people living with severe sight loss has jumped from 508 (2018) to 1125 (2024). That’s a huge **121% increase in demand** for the services we’re offering but also in the resources required to fulfil them.

"I was in a state of panic and confusion when I found out I was at risk of losing my job. As if by fate, I was contacted by Croydon Vision. I was taken aback by the willingness to help me. Daniel suggested writing a supporting letter to my employer, informing them about the available support mechanisms in place to assist me. Rather than termination, I was given a more accommodating role for my disability!" - A.K.



The increase in uptake is encouraging, we also know there are many more people with sight loss in Croydon. We are **determined to scale up outreach**. The scope of this task is exciting as well as daunting, and can only be achieved through team collaboration.

We’ve learnt that space-time is required, for someone to grieve loss of sight and **rebuilding lives** can take time and resources.

	Member journeys this year	Service cost per person
STEP 1 - Rebuilding lives	61%	£4,375
STEP 2 - Re-direction	8%	£1,155
STEP 3 - Upskilling	18%	£1,238
STEP 4 - Applying skills	7%	£894
STEP 5 - From surviving to thriving	6%	£738
Cost to Journey With 1 Person	100%	£8,400



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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES - continued
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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE – continued

PHASE 3 - BUILDING TO SUSTAIN THE NEXT 100 YEARS

KPI aspirations	What we've achieved so far.
<p>Increased income targets for YE24, YE25 and YE26 in line with Fundraising Strategy for the period.</p>	<p>Our income increased in 2023-24, however, cost also increased and this is due to a number of factors:</p> <p>Cost of living crisis brought about greater demand than anticipated.</p> <p>The overall response time from application of funds to receiving an award is longer than ever before which sometimes affect project delivery, sometimes covered by core due to the sensitivity of the service.</p> <p>This was the first year, with no direct funds from the council, to support people with sight loss, both practical and preventative work, amounting to just under 10% of our total income.</p> <p>However, with all the above happening, we've amplified our efforts to maintain sustainability. We did so, in a co-produced manner, to help bridge some of the gaps in loss of income (members, team and Trustees).</p> <p>The result of this meant that in 2023-24, some of our services have converted to paid for, from 22% to now 75%.</p> <p>A hardship fund is available, created by our members through fundraising. The funds are designated for people struggling financially.</p>
<p>Robust plans by YE24, for a new building to better serve the needs of the sight loss community and factor in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Access to funding for the build. b. Improved financial sustainability, post-build. 	<p>By summer of 2023, WSM Architect was appointed to undertake sketch plans for a new building (not limiting next door as location). The sketches were brought alive visually by Black grape Marketing, who produced a great video. This was then launched at our Gala dinner 2023. The vision and call to action became a movement overnight. The video was well received, enabling us to start building relationships with businesses as well as some members, who raised their hands, wanting to be a part of this movement.</p> <p>Whilst we continue to develop relationships with businesses and philanthropists, we are also working to understand the council's position regarding a building, exploring the right site for such an ambitious project.</p> <p>So far, a pre-application was put forward to the Council regarding the development at Croydon Vision. The Council considered the demolition of the existing buildings as per our proposal. However, due to conservation terms, did not accept the plan.</p> <p>The Council advised that any subsequent development would need to incorporate the retention of the existing buildings and would need to be subservient to the existing buildings so that they do not result in harm to the Conservation Area. As a result, they have advised that any potential development should be sited to the rear of the existing buildings and have noted that any potential development would be relatively limited in size. In addition to the above, the Council have also outlined several other potential planning concerns relating to the impact on neighbour amenity, character and appearance, access and parking provision.</p> <p>As we explore possibilities for a site, it was disappointing to receive this news from the planning team. However, it wasn't totally unexpected as the area within Croydon Vision is considered conservatory. Even a proposal to meet greater needs in our community isn't enough, laws of the land supersede.</p> <p>Going forward, our strategy now becomes; a focus on obtaining the funds for the project. The next CEO (2025) will explore options, together with the Board on where and timeline for this project to commence.</p>

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Statement of Financial Activities

The Statement of Financial Activities is shown on page 33, with a more detailed analysis of income and expenditure within the notes to the financial statements.

Risks, Reserves, and Insurance

The first half of the year was challenging with funds and some staff matters, whilst navigating new projects. The effect of the first half meant scaling back in terms of staffing which then affected some future development. However, by the third quarter, Croydon Vision saw a number of wins with funders such as Garfield Weston, Outreach Project etc. Staffing matter also resolved, this brought about much productivity, a culture of collaborative performance.

Going forward, increasing of reserves, ensuring that cash reserves equate to six months of operations. This conservative level of reserves will require close budget monitoring, including holding a balanced budget at least until reserves are back to cover six months of operational costs £141,000. The completion of the lift and building project has enhanced efficiency in utility, better utilisation of the premises, allowing for a decrease in some operational expense.

However, we also continue to explore time as a proxy for risk, the point of a risk-based reserves policy is to recognise that reserves are needed both for liquidity and to cover risks. Traditional reserves policies based on three-to-six months' turnover are overly focused on using time as a proxy for risk – we want to look further and wider than restricting organisational development.

However, apart from using time as a proxy for risk, we really want to assess and cover risks adequately. The point of a risk-based reserves policy is to recognise that reserves are needed both for liquidity and to cover risks. Traditional reserves policies based on three-to-six months' turnover are overly focused on using time as a proxy for risk – we want to look further and wider than restricted.

Income

In the twelve months of 2023-24 total income was £747,895 (2023: £733,646) and the was generated through donations, and legacies (£19,297), grants funding (£550,517), fundraising events (£8,821) service users and activity income (£55,978) hall hire and rental income (£106,380) and other income, including investment income (£6,902). More information on projects can be found elsewhere within this report and these Financial Statements. Most of these grant funding covers multiple years and has therefore changed the income profile of the Charity in the short to medium term.

Expenses

The total expenditure for the year was £815,677 (2023: £734,791). The increase of 11% reflect the impact of inflation and higher costs to the Charity. Staff and contract staff costs remain the largest single cost, comprising of 55% of costs at £451,716. Our average headcount was 15 (2023 13). Total direct charitable expenditure was £713,327 (2023: £650,363) which reflect the extra costs for new projects commencing in the year. Fundraising costs have increased by 22% which includes the costs of various fundraising events in the year and the additional resources needed to help us meet the challenges of the current fundraising environment.

Impact analysis (summary):

Existing and launch of new projects such as Motability Foundation, The Lost 500 by BIG Lottery, City Bridge Foundation and others has been a game changer, enabling Croydon Vision to reach far afield.

31% increase in membership, navigating demand vs supply is a current challenge 2023 (857), 2024 (1125). This resulted in **22%** increase in staff and contractor costs, to meet demand and needs for our members.

Overall direct charitable expense increased by **10%**, within the main variances being depreciation as a result of the acquisition of three minibuses towards the end of last year, staff and contract staff costs as explained above and direct project costs following on from the launch of the new projects.

There has been a modest **2%** increase in income this year, despite the loss of funding from the Council. The main variances being service user income which has doubled to £55,978 from £26,826 and increases in hall hire and rental income, along with continued success with grant funding applications.

However, the adverse effect of the loss of Council funding and the cost-of-living crisis has still resulted in a deficit this year of £67,782 which has an impact on our reserves. More details can be found in Note 19, pages 43 and 44.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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FINANCIAL REVIEW - continued

Principal funding sources

The Charity is dependent upon grants and donations from individual donors and institutions. Details of the Charity's income is set out in Notes 2 and 3 on page 38 of the accounts.

Balance Sheet

The above result led to a deficit of £67,782 (2023: £1,145), which has resulted in a combined fund balance of £1,475,624 (2023: £1,543,406) at the year end. The Charity's free reserves are £37,620 (2023: £54,121). An analysis of the funds can be found in Note 18 on page 42, with the movements within each fund detailed in Note 19 on pages 43 and 44.

Plan of Action (diversifying income)

Our Fundraiser at Croydon Vision continues to work towards reaching more foundation and trusts, for successful grants awards. In addition, Croydon Vision continues to develop its products, especially the Visual Awareness Workshops, with the aim to drive product development and further increase sight loss awareness in Croydon and surroundings.

Investment policy

The Trustees are responsible for the safekeeping of all assets of the Charity and may invest funds as they see fit.

Reserves Policy

The after effect of Covid-19 as well as the building project; lift installation impacted our reserves 2022-23. For this year, the cost-of-living crisis, increased depreciation (purchase of minibuses) as well as loss of grant from local authority has further depleted our unrestricted reserves to £37,620. We are concerned and looking at various ways to further diversify income. The Board, CEO, fundraising lead, and management have a contingency programme to increase reserves short and long term, working with the new strategy 2023-26, factoring inflation.

Furthermore, the gap between securing additional/new grants took longer than anticipated which resulted in a deep into reserves, to maintain the increased demand for services. These were project that had strong realistic expectations such as the Lost 500. It is now time to build back up, to ensure the organisation remains robust not just in asset but also unrestricted funds. This will enable the organisation to do more preventative work, protecting sight and prevent unavoidable sight loss in the next 100yrs.

Croydon Vision adopts the following principles in relation to on-going project funding:

- Planning for staffing changes will align with project-funding timeline; staffing expenditure will not be met by reserves.
- In exceptional circumstances when Trustees expressly wish that a specific activity continues and have a strong and realistic expectation that new funds will be received, designated funds will be used to sustain posts for a defined period.
- Redundancy for all members of staff for whom redundancy is applicable.
- Staff long-term sickness.
- Contracts and commitments, including Telephones, IT
- Accountant, HR Contract, and legal costs.
- 6 months operating cost of core (£23,500 per month, totalling £141,000).

Risk Management

An integrated risk strategy is in place which is overseen by the CEO and management. In addition, a risk management policy and register are in place. The strategy comprises the following:

- An annual review of the risks which Croydon Vision may have to face.
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks; and
- The implementation of procedures designed to report on and minimise any potential impact on Croydon Vision should any of those risks materialise.

The Board of Trustees is confident that the planned process will enable them to identify the major risks to which the Charity is exposed and that they have established systems to mitigate those risks. The Trustees re-appointed Mark Blackwell of MHR Consultancy Ltd to carry out an independent examination of the Charity's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Board of Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provision of the constitution requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the SORP 2019 FRS102;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Charity and financial information included on the Charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nigel Gooding, CBE (Chair)

For and on behalf of the Board of Trustees

30 September 2024

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('The Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charities accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mark Blackwell ACMA
M H R Consultancy Limited
Chartered Management Accountants
Ferneberga House
Alexandra Road
Farnborough
GU14 6DQ

30 September 2024

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

		2024	2023			
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total £	Total £
INCOMING AND ENDOWMENT FROM:						
Donations and Legacies	2	19,297	-	-	19,297	58,204
Charitable activities	3	131,308	475,187	-	606,495	570,896
Other trading activities	4	115,286	-	-	115,286	95,203
Investments	5	1,595	-	-	1,595	692
Other Income		<u>5,222</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,222</u>	<u>8,651</u>
Total Income		<u>272,708</u>	<u>475,187</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>747,895</u>	<u>733,646</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Raising funds	6	63,760	8,749	-	72,509	59,610
Charitable activities	7	<u>230,044</u>	<u>497,719</u>	<u>15,405</u>	<u>743,168</u>	<u>675,181</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>293,804</u>	<u>506,468</u>	<u>15,405</u>	<u>815,677</u>	<u>734,791</u>
Operating (Deficit)/Surplus		(21,096)	(31,281)	(15,405)	(67,782)	(1,145)
Net gains/(losses) on investments		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net (expenses)/Income		(21,096)	(31,281)	(15,405)	(67,782)	(1,145)
Transfer between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		(21,096)	(31,281)	(15,405)	(67,782)	(1,145)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS	19/20					
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		<u>362,067</u>	<u>148,764</u>	<u>1,032,575</u>	<u>1,543,406</u>	<u>1,544,551</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>340,971</u></u>	<u><u>117,483</u></u>	<u><u>1,017,170</u></u>	<u><u>1,475,624</u></u>	<u><u>1,543,406</u></u>

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**BALANCE SHEET
AT 31 MARCH 2024**

		2024	2023
	Notes	£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	14	1,427,633	1,491,189
Investments	15	<u>458</u>	<u>458</u>
		1,428,091	1,491,647
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock		-	1,045
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	16	77,019	84,368
Cash at bank		<u>168,487</u>	<u>162,988</u>
		245,506	248,401
LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	17	<u>(197,973)</u>	<u>(196,642)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>47,533</u>	<u>51,759</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>1,475,624</u>	<u>1,543,406</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>1,475,624</u></u>	<u><u>1,543,406</u></u>
TOTAL FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds	19	37,620	54,121
Designated funds		303,351	307,946
Restricted funds		117,483	148,764
Endowment funds		<u>1,017,170</u>	<u>1,032,575</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>1,475,624</u></u>	<u><u>1,543,406</u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on **30 September 2024** and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Nigel Gooding - Chair/Trustee

.....
Richard Wragg – Vice Chair/Trustee

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>7,160</u>	<u>157,903</u>
	7,160	157,903
Cash flows from investing activities		
Sale of fixed assets	-	2
Purchase of fixed assets	<u>(1,661)</u>	<u>(152,341)</u>
Cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>(1,661)</u>	<u>(152,339)</u>
Increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year expended	5,499	5,564
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year	<u>162,988</u>	<u>157,424</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	<u>168,487</u>	<u>162,988</u>

CASH FLOW NOTES

	2024 £	2023 £
Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities		
Net (expenditure) income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(67,782)	(1,145)
Adjustments for:		
Add back depreciation charge	65,217	43,001
Decrease/(increase) in stock	1,045	354
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	7,349	76,136
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<u>1,331</u>	<u>39,557</u>
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>7,160</u>	<u>157,903</u>

	2024 £	2023 £
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents		
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>168,487</u>	<u>162,988</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>168,487</u>	<u>162,988</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A summary of the principal accounting policies adopted judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the accounts are laid out below.

Basis of preparation of the Financial Statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the Charity and rounded to the nearest £.

Judgement and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, the Charity is required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Unrestricted funds may include designated funds where the Trustees, at their discretion, have created a fund for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for restricted purposes. Where required, a monitoring report is sent to the donor or funder detailing expenditure. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in Note 20 on pages 45 to 46.

Income

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met.

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by the FRS 102 SORP or FRS 102.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Costs of raising funds is detailed on Note 6 on page 39 and comprises the costs associated with attracting voluntary income and any fundraising events. Charitable expenditure is detailed in Note 7 on page 39, and comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature to support them.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES – continued

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, as the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The Trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements and consider these sufficient for the Charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or valuation less depreciation. Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Asset Category	Annual Rate
Motor Vehicles	25% on cost
Specialist Equipment	25% on cost
Computer Equipment	33.33% on cost
Fixtures and Fittings	20% on cost
Freehold Buildings	2% on cost
Land	No depreciation

Investments

Investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price when the amount is material. The income arising on the investments is shown under investment income in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Gains and losses on investment assets disposed of are shown as gains and losses in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand represents bank accounts where funds are available on demand.

Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making allowance for obsolete and slow-moving items.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. Prepayments are recognised at the invoiced cost prepaid.

Creditors and Provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Taxation

The Charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, it is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. No provision for taxation has been made in these financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and was offered to all staff. Contributions payable to the Charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

2. INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	19,297	4,657
Grants and Service Level fees	-	47,496
Legacies, Bequests and In Memory	-	6,051
	<u>19,297</u>	<u>58,204</u>

Income from donations and legacies was £19,297 (2023: £58,204) of which £19,297 was unrestricted (2023: £58,204) and £nil was restricted (2023: £nil).

3. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants - unrestricted	75,330	43,980
Grants - restricted	-	89,986
Grants - restricted	148,989	138,984
Grants - restricted	51,433	17,733
Grants - restricted	12,500	12,500
Grants - restricted	34,874	14,946
Grants - restricted	-	7,350
Grants - restricted	8,250	-
Grants - restricted	35,992	-
Grants - restricted	165,785	202,500
Grants - restricted	10,000	-
Grants - restricted	7,364	16,091
Service users Income	55,978	26,826
	<u>606,495</u>	<u>570,896</u>

4. INCOME FROM TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Fundraising	8,821	6,909
Hall hire	58,758	54,846
Rent received	47,622	33,448
Other	85	-
	<u>115,286</u>	<u>95,203</u>

Income earned from trading activities was £115,286 (2023: £95,203) all unrestricted.

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Investment income	1,595	692

All the Charity's investment income of £1,595 (2023: £692) is unrestricted.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

6. RAISING FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
AGM, Marketing costs and rebrand	6,400	16,362
Direct fundraising costs	45,975	43,248
Fundraising events	20,134	-
	<u>72,509</u>	<u>59,610</u>

Of the total raising funds expenditure of £72,509 (2023: £59,610), £8,749 was in respect of restricted funds (2023: £49,858) and £63,760 was in respect of unrestricted funds (2023: £9,752).

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct costs	Governance (See note 8)	2024	2023
	£	£	Totals £	Totals £
CAF Resilience	-	-	-	54,037
Children and Young People's Programme	8,250	-	8,250	-
Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund	34,971	-	34,971	-
Community Transport Assets	35,500	-	35,500	5,917
Community Transport Project	158,596	1,676	160,272	52,997
Core Services	222,511	22,937	245,448	366,095
Croydon Vision Community Events	7,214	-	7,214	-
The Lost 500 Project	238,291	5,228	243,519	180,674
We can create too Project	7,994	-	7,994	15,461
	<u>713,327</u>	<u>29,841</u>	<u>743,168</u>	<u>675,181</u>

Of the total charitable activities' costs of £743,168 (2023: £675,181), £497,719 was in respect of restricted funds (2023: £309,086), £230,044 was in respect of unrestricted funds (2023: £350,689) and £15,405 in respect of endowment funds (2023: £15,406)

8. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accountancy fees	13,597	9,789
Health & Safety	5,270	4,018
HR fees	9,364	5,706
Independent Examiner fee	1,200	990
Payroll fees	410	390
Professional fees	-	3,925
	<u>29,841</u>	<u>24,818</u>

Of the total governance costs of £29,841 (2023: £24,818), £6,904 was in respect of restricted funds (2023: £3,900) and £22,937 was in respect of unrestricted funds (2023: £20,618).

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

The Charity Trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the Charity in the year (2023: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2023: £nil).

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

10. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	372,754	322,573
Social security costs	26,509	23,538
Pension costs	<u>15,924</u>	<u>14,961</u>
	<u>415,187</u>	<u>361,072</u>

One employee had employee benefits in excess of £60,000 in the £60,000- £70,000 band (2023: 1).

Pension costs are allocated to activities in proportion to the related staffing costs incurred.

The Senior Management Team of the Charity comprises of the Trustees and those detailed on page 1 of the Trustees report. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the Charity were £160,828 (2023: £118,348).

11. STAFF NUMBERS

The average monthly number of employees (including casual and part time staff) during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
	Numbers	Numbers
Senior Management Team	3	4
Other Direct Charitable Staff	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>

12. PENSION COSTS

The company has a defined contribution pension scheme, which all employees are entitled to join. The company contributes 5% and the employees contributed 5% and employees may make further additional voluntary contributions.

During the year ended 31 March 2024, the Charity's total contributions amounted to £15,924 (2023: £14,961).

The Trustees are satisfied that any foreseeable change in employer's contributions can be budgeted for without detriment to the Charity's on-going activities.

13. TRANSACTIONS AND RELATED PARTIES

None of the Trustees received remuneration from their work with the Charity as Trustees. However, one of our Trustees (Frances Cullen) leads an activity at Croydon Vision and charges the organisation at a substantially reduced rate. Any connection between a Trustee or Senior Manager of the Charity with Service User, external contractor or supplier of services must be disclosed to the full Board of Trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party.

There were no other material related party transactions during the period.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold Property Unrestricted £	Freehold Property Endowment £	Other Assets £	Totals £
COST/VALUATION				
At 1 April 2023	344,581	1,155,419	235,369	1,735,369
Additions	-	-	1,661	1,661
Disposal	-	-	-	-
	<u>344,581</u>	<u>1,155,419</u>	<u>237,030</u>	<u>1,737,030</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>344,581</u>	<u>1,155,419</u>	<u>237,030</u>	<u>1,737,030</u>
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2023	36,635	122,844	84,701	244,180
Charge for year	4,595	15,405	45,217	65,217
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-	-
	<u>41,230</u>	<u>138,249</u>	<u>129,918</u>	<u>309,397</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>41,230</u>	<u>138,249</u>	<u>129,918</u>	<u>309,397</u>
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2024	<u>303,351</u>	<u>1,017,170</u>	<u>107,112</u>	<u>1,427,633</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>307,946</u>	<u>1,032,575</u>	<u>150,668</u>	<u>1,491,189</u>

Valuation of the Freehold Property

A revaluation of the freehold property was carried out in May 2015 by an external firm of valuers and property was valued on an “existing use” basis at £1,500,000. This was split between £500,000 land and £1,000,000 buildings.

Endowment Funds

In previous years, £500,000 of the freehold property was originally regarded by the Charity Commission as a permanent endowment and therefore restricted. At the time of the last valuation before May 2015, the freehold buildings had a total net book value of £649,115. So, using the fraction £500,000/£649,115 the restricted proportion is calculated at £1,017,170 net book value as at 31 March 2024 (2023: £1,032,575).

15. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	£ Listed Investments	£ Totals
MARKET VALUE		
At 1 April 2023	458	458
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
Revaluation	-	-
	<u>458</u>	<u>458</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>458</u>	<u>458</u>

The remaining non-UK listed investments are 135 shares in Banco Santander, S.A. shares of €0.50 nominal value. Revaluation was considered to be immaterial due the small value of the shares held.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

16. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other debtors	45,226	54,568
Accrued income	<u>31,793</u>	<u>29,800</u>
	<u>77,019</u>	<u>84,368</u>

17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	20,651	17,422
Deferred income	156,944	166,694
Tax and social security	6,332	8,641
Other creditors and accrued expenses	<u>14,046</u>	<u>3,885</u>
	<u>197,973</u>	<u>196,642</u>

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

Current year information for the net assets between funds:

				2024	2023
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	309,880	100,583	1,017,170	1,427,633	1,491,189
Investments	458	-	-	458	458
Current assets	75,469	170,037	-	245,506	248,401
Current liabilities	<u>(44,836)</u>	<u>(153,137)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(197,973)</u>	<u>(196,642)</u>
	<u>340,971</u>	<u>117,483</u>	<u>1,017,170</u>	<u>1,475,624</u>	<u>1,543,406</u>

Comparative year information for the net assets between funds:

				2023	2022
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	322,531	136,083	1,032,575	1,491,189	1,381,851
Investments	458	-	-	458	458
Current assets	65,217	183,184	-	248,401	319,327
Current liabilities	<u>(26,139)</u>	<u>(170,503)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(196,642)</u>	<u>(157,085)</u>
	<u>362,067</u>	<u>148,764</u>	<u>1,032,575</u>	<u>1,543,406</u>	<u>1,544,551</u>

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – Current Year

	At 1/4/23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund – Free reserves	54,121	(16,501)	-	37,620
Designated funds				
Designated fund – Freehold building	<u>307,946</u>	<u>(4,595)</u>	-	<u>303,351</u>
	362,067	(21,096)	-	340,971
Restricted funds				
Children & Young People Fund	-	-	-	-
Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund	-	-	-	-
Community Transport Assets	136,083	(35,500)	-	100,583
Community Transport Project	6,086	5,093	-	11,179
Lost 500 Project	5,965	(244)	-	5,721
We can create too	<u>630</u>	<u>(630)</u>	-	-
	148,764	(31,281)	-	117,483
Endowment funds				
Freehold Building	<u>1,032,575</u>	<u>(15,405)</u>	-	<u>1,017,170</u>
	1,032,575	(15,405)	-	1,017,170
	<u>1,543,406</u>	<u>(67,782)</u>	-	<u>1,475,624</u>

Net movement in funds for the current year are as follows:

	Income £	Expenses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	272,708	(289,209)	(16,501)
Designated fund – Freehold building	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,595)</u>	<u>(4,595)</u>
	272,708	(293,804)	(21,096)
Restricted funds			
Children & Young People	8,250	(8,250)	-
Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund	35,992	(35,992)	-
Community Transport Assets	-	(35,500)	(35,500)
Community Transport Project	165,785	(160,692)	5,093
Croydon Vision Community Events 2023	10,000	(10,000)	-
Lost 500 Project	247,796	(248,040)	(244)
We can create too	<u>7,364</u>	<u>(7,994)</u>	<u>(630)</u>
	475,187	(506,468)	(31,281)
Endowment funds			
Freehold Building	<u>-</u>	<u>(15,405)</u>	<u>(15,405)</u>
	-	(15,405)	(15,405)
	<u>747,895</u>	<u>(815,677)</u>	<u>(67,782)</u>

20. FUND DESCRIPTION

Unrestricted Funds

General Fund

This fund is held to meet the day-to-day activities of the Charity in line with the Charity's objectives. This fund has been raised through donations, legacies and grants from Trusts and Foundations, an example below:

Garfield Weston Foundation - Changing how we see, changing how we are seen

This funding enabled the charity to upscale services, reaching many more people living with sight loss in Croydon, the journey from **Surviving to Thriving**

How we did this.

- Outreach Service
- Lunch Service
- Counselling Service
- Advice & Advocacy Service
- Upskilling through accessible Tech Training

Designated Funds

Freehold Building

This fund is held to match the unrestricted element of the Charity's freehold buildings. The unrestricted portion of the building has a net book value at 31 March 2024 of £307,946 see note 14, page 41 for further details).

Endowment Funds

Freehold Building

In previous years, £500,000 of the freehold property was originally regarded by the Charity Commission as a permanent endowment and therefore restricted. At the time of the last valuation before May 2015, the freehold buildings had a total net book value of £649,115. So, using the fraction £500,000/£649,115 the restricted proportion is calculated at £1,017,170 net book value as at 31 March 2024 (2023: £1,032,575).

Restricted Funds

CAF Resilience

The CAF grant focused on transformational change as we build to sustain the organisation over the next three years.

- To reach more people and smash taboos of sight loss
- Becoming an organisation that 'teach people to fish' thereby increase independence.
- Develop our model, Heart of a Charity, and Mindset of a Business

20. FUND DESCRIPTION

Restricted Funds

Motability Foundation - Community Transport Assets and Project

We kicked off year one of project, it had steeped learnings with many satisfactions of meeting needs. The project is directly aimed at improving community transport options in the London Borough of Croydon for people living with the disability of sight loss and sometimes other complex health conditions. To meet the needs of our existing members, others in the community who are impaired by sight loss and mobility issues together with targeting the individuals who are part of the Lost 500 project and their families.

To further collaborate with existing organisations that we work with as well as to forge new relationships, therefore extending the support we offer to many more people in Croydon. The funding is twofold;

Capital cost to purchase 3 minibuses, replacing our old fleet. Ongoing project support for community transport for people with sight loss and other disabilities.

See impact – page 10

We can create too – Morrisons

This project was a game changer for our members. So far, we've organised 34 sessions of art and pottery, 29 sessions of craft workshops as well as events and exhibitions, all of which promotes social inclusion, wellbeing, and increased self-esteem. Below gives some impact shared by Members.

"Prior to the art and pottery classes, I would be alone, staring at the walls in the care home I reside. It made me feel depressed and anxious. Now, I come to the art class in the morning and pottery in the afternoon. I enjoy being creative. I've been showing other people my work and they are surprised; wondering how I do it and how I think of things that makes me feel good. Croydon Vision is a nice environment and makes me feel good. I feel more relaxed doing art, it helps with my mental health. We are looking forward to show casing our work in Croydon." **Mark.**

Lost 500 Project

Year two of this project sees increased outreach, resulting in 268 new members, meeting their needs. The project is funded by The Big Lottery, Edward Gostling Foundation, City Bridge Foundation, The Vision Foundation other funders.

In the midst of a pandemic, it became absolutely clear that the referral system is failing people in Croydon. Upon initial diagnosis of their sight loss, **527** individuals were left on their own, not referred by statutory professionals to Croydon Vision. The 527 individuals continue to be dependent on family/friends, isolated and many living a degenerating lifestyle. We wanted to reach these individuals and transform lives.

The total cost of the project amounts to £869,182 (excluding Outreach expansion). We are grateful to the above funders (some 3/2/1 year), their support enables us to transform the lives of:

47 – Children and Young People

364 – Working Age

116 – Over 65s

- Improve the physical and mental health of people with sight loss
- Improve inclusion in the labour market.
- Help overcome technological and digital exclusion

21. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The Charity has authorised and contracted for expenditure of £Nil. The Charity has authorised but not contracted for expenditure of £Nil in its capital budget for the upcoming year.

**CROYDON VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
(A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION)**

**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Voluntary income		
Donations	19,297	4,657
Grants and service level contracts	-	47,496
Legacies, Bequests, and in Memory	-	6,051
	<u>19,297</u>	<u>58,204</u>
Incoming resources from charitable activities		
Service users' income	55,978	26,826
Grants	550,517	544,070
	<u>606,495</u>	<u>570,896</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Fundraising events	8,821	6,909
Hall hire	58,758	54,846
Rent received	47,622	33,448
Other	85	-
	<u>115,286</u>	<u>95,203</u>
Investment Income		
Bank Interest	1,589	678
Dividends	6	14
	<u>1,595</u>	<u>692</u>
Other Income		
Sundry income	5,222	8,651
	<u>5,222</u>	<u>8,651</u>
Total incoming resources	747,895	733,646
Fundraising costs		
AGM, Marketing costs and rebrand	6,400	16,362
Direct fundraising costs	45,975	43,248
Fundraising events	20,134	-
	<u>72,509</u>	<u>59,610</u>
Charitable activities		
Staff Salaries	415,187	361,072
Team Training (staff and volunteers)	2,833	9,450
Staff Recruitment	758	8,232
Contract Staff	36,529	9,001
Staff Travelling and Meetings	1,203	1,393
Staff Welfare	1,727	3,242
Consultancy	5,561	5,307
Depreciation	65,217	43,001
Direct Projects expenses	77,696	48,982
Flat expenses	10,155	23,456
Hall expenses	6,198	15,636
IT and website	11,870	10,438
Office Administration	26,414	48,629
Premises expenses	46,843	53,488
Lift project	-	6,657
Volunteer expenses	5,136	2,379
	<u>713,327</u>	<u>650,363</u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

