


ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

# EVOLVING WITH PURPOSE



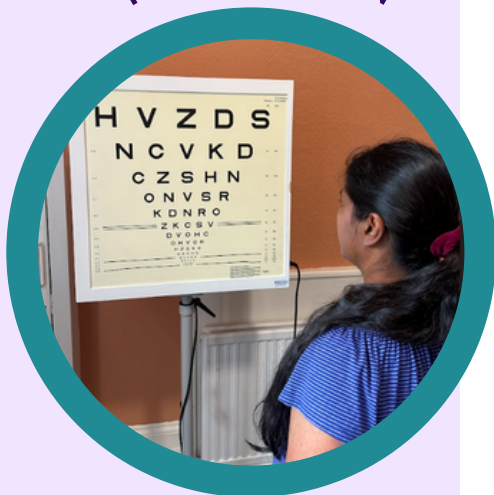
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Annual Review is available at  
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PREVENTION



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# OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY

We talk a lot about our vibrant community. Here's a snapshot of what we get up to. The images include community events at Bedford Hall, excursions to enjoy the great outdoors together, our children and young people service, our working age group influencing best practice at TFL, and volunteers week celebrations. Thank you to everyone who contribute towards making our community vibrant.



# A WORD FROM OUR CEO

As I sat down to write this note - my last as Chief Executive - I felt a surge of emotions. There are no words to describe how deeply I've been moved by cross-sector reactions to my leaving, the outpouring of love and reminiscing on **our transformative achievements**.

Recently I re-read my very first newsletter from February 2018. "It has been great meeting many of you and hearing your thoughts, ideas and the challenges within the organisation. Together with the team, my aim is to build on the strengths and achievements of the past; and to **take the organisation to the next level.**"



Over the last 7 years, that's exactly what we've done, together. We've developed and reshaped Croydon Vision to be effective through ingenuity, commitment to excellence, and passion for serving our communities. A few incredible accomplishments include:

- A co-production meeting that was key to guiding our **initial stabilising plan**.
- Rebranding to meet needs for all ages and **defining our values and culture**.
- Co-creating our first **strategic plan**, and smashing targets, together.
- Responding to **Covid-19** with collective resilience and adaptability, to serve.
- Introducing and embedding the model, '**Heart of a charity, mindset of a business.**'
- Modernisation of **our building**, including installation of a lift for accessibility.
- Our **Centennial Gala Dinner** celebration in 2023; launching build to sustain vision.
- Creating a collaborative performance tool for impact – **our 5 steps model**.
- Developed a **Community Low Vision Clinic** with **Moorfields**, integrated care model.

Although there are many achievements that have given me pride during my tenure, I've also had some crucial learnings. Having the **right people** is a superpower and through those necessary and meaningful relationships, I've learnt to balance care with candour. The co-creation of our recruitment model **Commitment, Attitude and Performance (CAP)** became a game changer, managing expectations from both sides.

We've had some tough conversations over the years, which is only natural as an organisation **evolves** to become more efficient and affordable. The path to a firmer foundation hasn't always been pain-free, but - despite the current macroeconomic and geopolitical environments - I believe I am leaving this organisation well-positioned to meet opportunities and challenges. I have loved my time at Croydon Vision and I desire we make way for our new leader as they craft a new legacy of their own.

I know that together you'll maintain an unwavering dedication to transforming more lives, from dependence to independence, whilst raising awareness on preventable sight loss. Finally, I'd like to extend **BIG thanks** to past and present team (volunteers and staff), members, board members, and partners, for the privilege to serve you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susanette Mansour'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Susanette Mansour**  
CEO

# OUR CHAIR'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

## It's been a year of celebrations

In July 2023, we celebrated 100 years of serving the community and transforming lives for people with sight loss in Croydon. We celebrated with a **summer BBQ** in July, followed by our **Centennial Gala Dinner** at Fairfield Halls in October. These events were important, as a way to say thank you to everyone connected with Croydon Vision and who continue to make this organisation so special. It was also important to pay tribute to those who, 100 years ago, started us on the journey to where we are now.

Another significant landmark was becoming the proud recipient of the **King's Award** for Voluntary Service. This is a huge honour and testament to everyone involved with Croydon Vision. Our members, volunteers, staff and supporters, together as a team, contribute to our success. We are a family and this underpins our organisational values.

## Our Ambitious Future

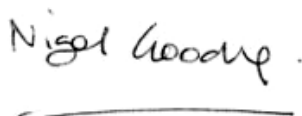
We are ambitious for our future; we want to leave a legacy for the next 100 years. The launch of our ambitious **Strategic Plan for 2023-26** aims to do precisely that. It builds on our strong past and puts in place transformative plans, including a new **multi-functioning building** dedicated to the service of our sight-loss community. Working together I am confident that we can achieve our goals.

## Thank You and New Beginnings

A huge thank you to everyone connected with Croydon Vision for your amazing support over the past year. And on behalf of us all, I want to **pay tribute to our CEO**, Susanette Mansour, who, after seven years, is moving on to new challenges and opportunities at the end of December 2024. Susanette has provided outstanding leadership. Her strategic vision, dedication, unwavering service and commitment to Croydon Vision have been instrumental in bringing about transformational change with heart of a charity and mindset of a business. Susanette's ability to navigate challenges, including guiding us through the major challenges of the pandemic, cost of living, inspire teams and drive change for the benefit of Croydon Vision have laid the foundations for our future.

Thank you for everything and we wish you every success for the future. You leave a strong legacy that will help us to continue **evolving** and **developing**.

As we prepare for our future, one thing will never change; our community and members will always be at the heart of everything we do! I look forward to our next chapter together!



**Nigel Gooding CBE** Chair of Trustees



# A CLEAR STRATEGY

Our strategy for 2023-2026 focuses on preventative work (avoidable sight loss), whilst providing practical support to transform lives and develop a culture of giving back to the community.



## Embracing Aspirations

We envision reaching as many people as possible experiencing mild to severe sight loss in Croydon, 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 prevention, smashing taboos and retaining a laser-focus 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 by March 2025 is 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) & Clicks (virtual) to serve our community.



## Driven by our Purpose

We put people first. We empower our people, on their journey to independence. We take great pride in our Vibrant Community.

Three crystal-clear statements that underpins everything we hope to achieve.

# CROYDON VISION IN ACTION

Our focus is on transforming lives for the people in our vibrant community. The numbers - especially when compared with last year's (Sept 2023 to Aug 2024) - demonstrate the way we put our dynamic ambitions into practice.



**1,125**

An outstanding **32% increase in membership** in the last year, from 857 members and continuously upwards, joining our vibrant community.



**769**

Individual trips - we now have weekly excursions than just summer, compared to 117 last year.



**2,019**

**Community outreach**, we connected with 2,019 people in our borough, up from 939.



**1,600+**

Pairs of glasses we collected for our **Eyes Wide Open** campaign, cross sector (1,400 last year).



**223**

Home visits we conducted this year, up from 220 last year.



**3,585**

A **28% increase** in freshly-prepared hot lunches served, up from 2,795 last year.



**309**

Cookery class participation rose from 235 to 309, **upskilling** our members, to boost independence.



**193**

193 counselling sessions run through Croydon Vision, as part of our **rebuilding step**, up from 128.



**169**

169 accessible tech sessions provided to upskill and redirect members, boosted from 92 last year.



**13**

We ran 13 **Visual Awareness** Workshops, to promote inclusion in workplaces, from 9 last year.

**£166,469**

Advice & Advocacy enabled 29 of our members to access additional funds of £166,469, to enable **financial independence** as part of rebuilding lives.

# A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

We had five big aspirations to prevent sight loss in our area for this period. This is how we're meeting them...

1

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.

- 55% increase in community outreach and engagement.
- This resulted in building relationships with 28 businesses, and facilitate visual awareness workshops.
- Furthermore, we worked with businesses to retain employees with sight loss, providing them with information about Access to Work (DWP).



2

To launch two media campaigns each year for YE24, YE25 and YE26.

- Continued our Eyes Wide Open campaign, which had fantastic uptake with local businesses and the community for the second-year running.
- Collected more than 1,600 pairs of glasses as part of Eyes Wide Open, which continues to raise CV's profile
- Hosted 120 people at our **Summer BBQ**, a huge success and increased awareness of avoidable sight loss.
- During National Eye Health Week, members of the team (volunteers and staff) were present throughout the borough, for awareness and support.
- During community outreach, we've held eye health talks and seen a number of participants take immediate actions, to book an eye test. Some were unaware that tests can be incentivised by their employer.





# A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

## 3

Connect and build relations with five schools by YE24, 10 local schools by YE25 and 15 local schools by YE26.

- Our Officers and the Outreach Lead collaborated and visited schools, universities to raise awareness.
- It's been amazing to see young people engaged, asking questions, loving the gadgets and leaving with knowledge and takeaways they can apply.
- For 2023-24, we reached seven schools, including Royal Russell, Brit School, Trinity, Chestnut Primary, Minster Junior School.



## 4

Connecting with five new voluntary organisations each year, including sports facilities, local charities and other sight loss service providers.

- Our project by Motability Foundation enables us to support several in Croydon with transport solutions.
- We smashed our target and provided vital services to over 12 organisations - bringing more awareness of service provision and avoidable sight loss.
- Our CEO Co-Chairs the Southeast and London region for sight loss, influencing and sharing vital knowledge to strengthen the sector.



## 5

To collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, to launch an app by YE25, for social networking, raising awareness of sight loss and reach.

- This is pending, the idea behind this, to provide an app, or 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.



# PROVIDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT

## CROYDON VISION'S FIVE STEP MODEL IN ACTION...

### STEP 5 - SURVIVING TO THRIVING



We empower members as agents of change; mentors and ambassadors for sight loss. Generating income and changing attitudes across Croydon and beyond.

### STEP 4 - APPLYING KNOWLEDGE



We encourage those with the skills, to volunteer at Croydon Vision and other community organisations. Working with businesses to promote inclusion, running mock interviews and arranging apprenticeships.

### STEP 3 - UPSKILLING



We're here to improve social mobility through tech and living aid training, higher education, coaching and mentorship.

### STEP 2 - REDIRECTING



We encourage soul-searching using the tried and tested Golden Circle approach Why > How > What. We then walk alongside each person on their journey to work out current and future aspirations.

### STEP 1 - REBUILDING



We provide advice and advocacy, talking therapy, peer buddying, and active wellbeing sessions. Becoming part of our vibrant community is part of each personalised action plan.

## ANNE'S EXPERIENCE

One member shares their Five Step journey:



"I want to help empower others from survival to thriving in life. It is my hope that the stigma around sight loss will end as more and more employers invest in the visually impaired and they will eventually become employers themselves."

"When a vacancy became available, I did not think twice to apply for the role. This was my perfect opportunity to utilise the knowledge I possess in living with sight loss to help transform the lives of those needing that extra encouragement."

"I knew this would definitely be an uphill task, but being an ambassador for such a worthwhile cause would certainly have a lasting impact on the lives of the recipient, as well as giving fulfilment to me."

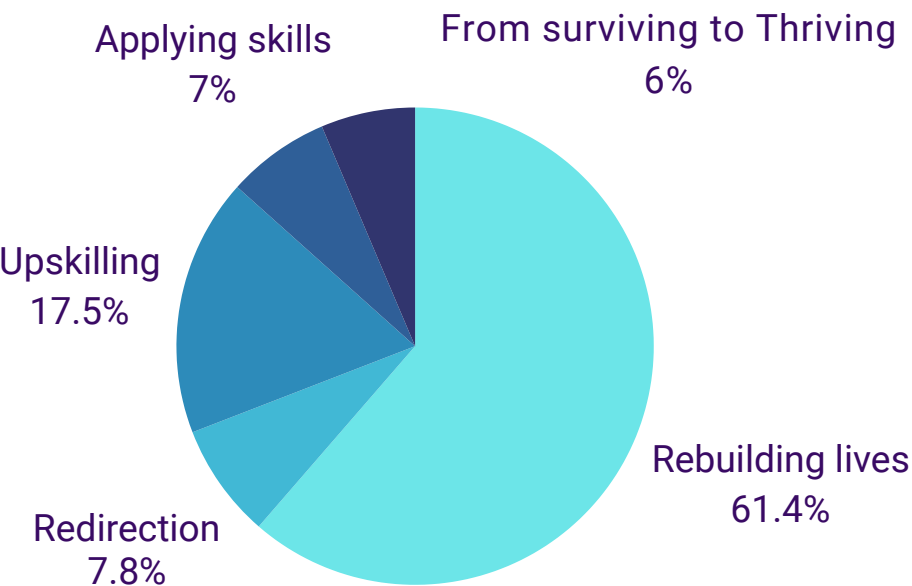
"The past three years saw a paradigm shift in the way I envisioned helping others who are visually impaired like myself. I became more aware of the needs of others, to encourage and motivate others as they navigate with sight loss, to re-direct their lives"

"My journey with Croydon Vision began, when I signed up as a member and then a volunteer. I went on various excursions with members, this allowed me to learn more about individual sight loss journey as well as learning their coping strategies as most live alone."

# 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
<b>Cost to Journey With 1 Person</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£8,400</b>



# BUILDING TO SUSTAIN

We want to thrive as a community, not just survive, so we're building to sustain for the next 100 years, using the model 'Heart of a Charity, Mindset of a Business':

## Increased income targets

We aim to increase our income targets for YE24, YE25 and YE26 in line with our Fundraising Strategy.

In 2023-24, income increased but this was alongside cost increases see below:

- **Cost of living crisis** brought about greater demand than anticipated.
- **Response** from Trust applications, to receiving an award is longer than ever before, sometimes impacting on reserves due to the sensitivity of the service.
- This was the first year we received **no direct funds** from the council to support people with sight loss, previously this amounted to 10% of our income.

In light of these challenges, we've amplified our efforts to maintain sustainability:

- We **co-produced**, to bridge some of the income gaps (members and team).
- We **converted** some of our services from free to paid, from **22% to now 75%**.
- A **hardship fund** is available for members struggling financially, this was initiated and implemented by other members through fundraising.

## Robust plans for a better building

A new building will better serve our community; to make that happen we'll need access to funding for the building and improved financial sustainability, post-build.



**BUILDING MOMENTUM:** Plans were drawn up by WSM

Architect and brought to life in a video by Black Grape Marketing.

The Vision was shared at our **2023 Gala Dinner** with a call to action. This became a movement, with local businesses and individuals signed up to support.

**TACKLING SETBACKS:** A pre-application was put to the Council, who rejected the proposal to demolish existing buildings due to conservation terms, stating any development would need to incorporate existing buildings at the rear. It was disappointing to receive this news, prioritising conservation over community.

**FORGING AHEAD:** The strategy now is to focus on obtaining the funds for the project and establish a reasonable timeline, to source viable location.

# FINANCIAL UPDATE

**April-March 2024 brought a mix of opportunities and challenges.** We contended with the pandemic, a massive period of modernisation and a cost of living crisis, all in a borough with complex challenges and also bent on scaling up inclusion and awareness.

**Income** totalling £745,125 was generated through grants, donations, and legacies (£606,495), fundraising events (£19,297) activity income (£115,286), this is 21% above last year's income, due to increased demand for lunch service and hall hire etc.

**Expenses** amounted to £815,677, (2023: £734,791) of which staff costs (salaries, national insurance, and pension costs) amounted to £428,597 inclusive of contractors. The overall number of employees at the end of March 2024 was 15.

**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 and meet more needs.

**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 area of continued focus.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Trading Income	67,811	95,203	115,286
Investments	22	692	1,595
Charitable activities	374,589	570,896	606,495-
Fundraising, Donation & Legacy	69,987	58,204	19,297
Other Income	-	8,651	2,452
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£512,409</b>	<b>£733,646</b>	<b>£745,125</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>1,125</b>

## Our plan to diversify income

Our fundraiser at Croydon Vision continues to work on grant applications with foundations and trusts. We're also continuing to develop our products, especially Visual Awareness Workshops, to promote awareness in Croydon and beyond.

**Richard Wragg**



For our full annual accounts 2023-24,  
contact us or visit;

[croydonvision.org.uk/downloads/](https://croydonvision.org.uk/downloads/)

# OUR TEAM - STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

## What is it like to be part of the Croydon Vision team?

Awareness and integrity ensure we handle every interaction with honesty and a deep understanding of 'others' needs.

The care and passion that volunteers, staff and members exemplify makes it a community of belonging for many.

Diversity is clearly reflected in our membership and team. This means we have a range of perspectives and experiences that enhance our community.

I identify strongly with the values here, they resonate with my personal beliefs and inspire me to contribute positively and meaningfully to our community.

Compassion shapes our approach to various situations, allowing us to provide the best support and care.

We are a strong team that consistently collaborates to ensure success in all endeavours and everyone feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

### Kai's journey from member to volunteer...

"I initially came to Croydon Vision for help, to apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). I was hesitant to get involved with Croydon Vision because I was in denial of sight loss. A vacancy came up and 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'. I am elated to work for such a honourable charity, who advocate for people like me and I love that I can give back"



# OUR TEAM - STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

## What drives you to be part of Team CV?

My enthusiasm is driven by making a difference to people's lives.

Following the help I got from CV, I asked myself 'What can I do for Croydon Vision?' I don't do things for the glory, it gives me purpose.

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.

I feel CV really cares about me as an individual. I'm glad to be involved, it feels special.

I have a strong belief that as humans, helping out is important, so that's what we as a team and it feels great.

Croydon Vision is a super organisation, and I am very proud to volunteer here.



How our Members describe the Team:

**"CARING" "DEDICATED" "WARM" "WELCOMING"**  
**"CO-OPERATIVE" "ENTHUSIASTIC" "HELPFUL" "DETERMINED"**

## What is life like, at Croydon Vision?



**“Croydon Vision team make it easy for kids to connect with them, beyond the fun, they also provide valuable educational sessions, including interactive science lessons and practical skills like touch typing.” CV Parent**

**“The food is excellent, and I have made friends that I now get to see every week!”**



**“Croydon Vision does amazing work for people like myself and many other members on a daily basis. I am excited because the lift has made the building more accessible for me.” Margaret (home visit)**

**“They try very hard to make people feel very included.”**



**“Croydon Vision is both my eyes and ears. They can see for us and hear us and assist us in things that we are unable to do ourselves.” - Olayinka**

**“I love that we don’t sit around comparing notes on whose sight loss is the worst, we are friends coming together to enjoy various activities.”**



**“Croydon Vision has helped me come out of myself. I am a lot more positive now. I have made friends and feel very included . Now I enjoy giving back to my community and join a number of excursions” - Dr Paul**

**“Mum has a routine now, if it wasn’t for Croydon Vision, she would be stuck at home. The team really understand her needs”**



# THANK YOU

Huge thanks to our volunteers and trustees; you are truly the heart of the charity. Here's some of what your generosity has equated to this year:



**£2,518**

Befriending



**£12,588**

Catering & Hospitality



**£4,196**

Community Events



**£17,623**

Excursions



**£1,678**

Group Support / Admin



**£15,106**

Office Admin



**£13,428**

Social Group Leaders



**£16,784**

Trustees

# FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Anton Jurgen  
Awards for All  
Big Lottery  
CAF Resilience Fund  
City bridge Foundation  
Co-Op Foundation  
Cost of Living Grant  
Croydon College  
Edward Gostling Foundation  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Hobson Foundation  
Hospital Saturday Fund  
Moorfields Eye Hospital  
Morrisons Foundation  
Motability Foundation  
Percy Bilton  
Powell Foundation  
Ros Harding Trust  
Vision Foundation  
Worshipful Company of  
Spectacle Makers  
Will Charitable Trust

**Special thanks to everyone who joined us to celebrate our centenary and also the below:**

Rawlings Opticians  
Rotary Selsdon  
Woldingham Wives

**£83,922 IN TOTAL**

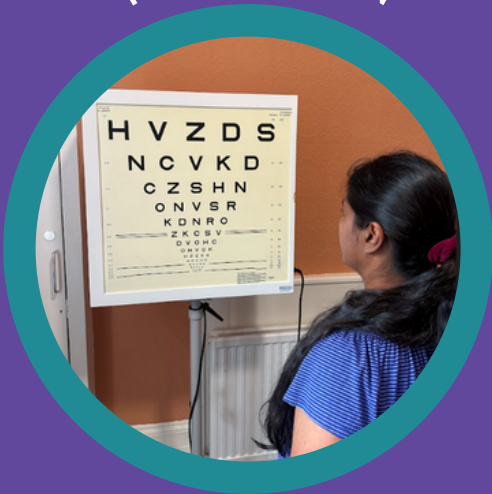


This total reflects all volunteering roles not just those shown above.

Thank you to all our members, volunteers and staff, who have been so generous with their donations and raising funds for Croydon Vision. We are so grateful for your continued support.



PREVENTION



PRACTICAL SUPPORT



BUILDING TO SUSTAIN



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