



Herts Vision Loss

Weltech Business Centre

Welwyn Garden City

AL7 2AA

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Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22

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1. General Information

Herts Vision Loss is a charitable company, limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 15th March 1995 and registered as a charity on 9th June 1995. The governing documents are the Memorandum & Articles of Association.

Registered Office Unit 29, Weltech Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City, AL7 2AA

Telephone 01707 324 680

Website www.hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Charity Number 1047148

Company Number 3033089

Chairman of the Board Mrs Alex Hickinbotham

Company Secretary Paul Taylor

Chief Executive Officer Mrs Joanna Carter

Patron Lord Homes of Richmond MBE

Board of Directors

The directors of the Company for the purposes of the Companies Act and the Charity Trustees for the purpose of the Charities Act are as follows:

Alex Hickinbotham	Chair from June 2020 onwards
John Page *	Vice Chair from June 2020 onwards
Paul Taylor	Company Secretary from October 2021
Keith Harding	(Retired November 2021)
Richard Seaman	
John Warner-Smith	
Alison Macdougall	Commenced in post July 2020
Jennie Beebe	Commenced in post October 2020
Raj Visram	Commenced in post March 2021
David Ottolanguai	Commenced in post March 2021

*Indicates visually impaired person

Honorary Advisor

Mrs Tara Petri
5 Broadleaf Grove, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7AZ

Insurer

Towergate Insurance
Funtley Court, 19 Funtley Hill, Fareham, PO16 7UY

Bankers

Santander UK PLC,
Bridle Road, Bootle, G1R 0AA

Shawbrook Bank Ltd,
Lutea House, Warley Hill
Brentwood CM13 3BE

Clydesdale & Yorkshire Bank
30 St Vincent Place, Glasgow, G1 2EU

Nationwide Building Society,
Pipers Way, Swindon SN38 1NW.

2. Herts Vision Loss Performance at a glance

Operational Performance

Numbers of:	2018/9	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
New referrals (New referral service commenced in 2021)				475
Children see in schools		312	240	56
Home visits completed	1,100	1,430	1,658	1,999
People who have received information in hospitals	240	200	200	158
People who have had counselling	88	90	100	80
Counselling sessions given	400	520	460	400
People attending support groups	28	48	68	81

Financial Performance

£'000	2018/9	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total Income	£202.6k	£138.3k	£127.2k	£287.3k
Total Expenditure	£201.9k	£170.5k	£126.9k	£285.8k
Net Income/expenditure	£0.7k	(£32.2k)	£0.3k	£1.5k
Income from government contracts	£58.6k	£58.6k	£58.6k	£244.8k
Income from government grants	£1.1k	£2.8k	£8.1k	£4.1k
Dedicated Premises Reserve	£689.6k	£659.6k	£659.6k	£659.6k

3. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair, Alex Hickinbotham



I am delighted to present the 2021-2022 Annual Report for Herts Vision Loss. Once again, I am pleased at the progress and level of service and resourcefulness the organisation has managed to achieve within such challenging times.

Covid

Covid has continued to necessitate added caution and restrictions on the delivery of our services, which our staff and volunteers have been stoical in finding innovative methods to maintain support to our users. Whilst the restrictions imposed in 2020 to protect the population have been slowly reduced, HVL respects the needs of certain organisations and individuals to use face masks and distance themselves from others. Designed to reassure individuals of their health and protection, this will also include Rapid Flow testing should symptoms occur.

Trustee change

In November 2021 we said goodbye to Keith Harding, a long-standing Trustee of approximately 14 years, who held the Company Secretary role and was chairman of our Finance and Governance Committee. We thank him for his tireless work and support to the charity along with his sound advice and knowledge. We will sorely miss his input.

His roles of both Company secretary and Chairman of the Finance and Governance Committee are now in the capable hands of Paul Taylor.

Financial situation

The financial management over the past year has again been a closely monitored and effective process, ensuring we have achieved a small surplus at our year end. We have increased our contracted income from Herts County Council, in partnership with Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service (HHAS) and worked with the Sensory Services and Commissioners to extend the HVL ability to register and contact new users earlier than previously. This enables them to get information, advice and links to other key help areas and support groups. This is an area of growth for both HVL due to the expected growth across Hertfordshire of visually impaired residents.

In addition, we have retained the specific reserved funds which we plan to use to purchase a property for our new headquarters. This search is proving more time consuming than we had envisaged, mainly due to the right type of property not being on the market or in the wrong location.

Independent Auditor.

Once again, we thank Tara Petri for providing the independent scrutiny of our financial position for 2021-22.

Bids opportunities have changed.

The previous system of seeking funding via Bid opportunities has become more challenging during the past 2 years and has required our Chief Executive Officer to adjust where and how she seeks funding. Likewise, some of our longer-term funding agreements that are spread over more than 1 year, such as BBC Children in Need, have required HVL to reappraise how the funds will be spent following Covid restrictions. Many bids have also changed their purpose to support Covid affected services and have a differing accent on support provision. This scenario is continuing, so necessitating HVL to reassess its processes and aim to maintain relevance to funders. Likewise traditional fundraising methods have been hugely affected leading HVL to seek other routes.

Governance

The Finance and Governance Committee oversee the Risk Management of all actions within HVL. It assesses both current risks and works to anticipate possible future risks and implements mitigation. This has worked well and is undertaken in an open and transparent method which originates from both the Board and service facing areas, ensuring as many subjects as possible are covered. The Risk register is comprehensive and identifies the issue, level of risk, what mitigation is used and by whom.

Premises working group

Many of you will recall HVL's plan to find suitable permanent facilities. To pursue this aim, the Board has instigated a Property Working Group to focus on seeking our new 'home'. It is comprised of trustees, staff representatives and the Chief Executive. This ensures all aspects and viewpoints can be taken into account. Several premises have been viewed and considered, in different parts of the County. However, we have not yet found the right fit. We recognise our duty to ensure our

reserved funds are diligently spent on a property which will serve the Charity for a long time and will be accessible to service users. The search continues. In the meantime, the Premises Working Group has supported the move to more suitable rented space in Unit 29 at the Weltech Centre in Welwyn Garden City. We moved in June 2022 and are very excited with the extra space and opportunities to deliver our services. We arranged an official launch of the new area in September 2022, to encourage more volunteers and users and their families or carers to celebrate.

Services, Strategic and Operational Management of HVL

Counselling

Our Head of counselling, Vanessa Browell, retired and we thank her for her invaluable service provision and advice. Since her departure we have reorganised the service in line with changes to service requirements occurring as a response to Covid restrictions and HVL have been able to provide extra support to other organisations where relevant. Alma Henderson has been at the helm of this and HVL has adapted its Counselling provision to offer phone and face-to-face support for both adults and children. HVL provides up to 7-8 counselling sessions per week, either in person or via the telephone. This caters for approximately 70-80 people per year. We continue to have a very good reputation for how the service is provided and help support services in other areas.

Vision Loss Advisors

Our Vision Loss Advisors undertake approximately 90-95 visits to our users per month in addition to supporting schools, our schools programme, hospital clinics and user groups.

We have approximately 1,570 active service users which we adjust our input for their specific needs and help them liaise with support groups and information links etc.

This year we saw Sophia Ramsden move on to pastures new and we thank her for the work she has done.

User Groups

These are found across Hertfordshire with some areas being better served than others for a variety of reasons such as interest in attendance, venue availability, access and types of activities undertaken or wanted. HVL is mindful to encourage development of new or regenerating older support groups.

Volunteers

Our invaluable volunteers continue to provide Befriending support to allocated service users, support hospital clinics, assist with operational activities and other various activities as required.

Sight news

To ensure a wide communication opportunity with service users we continue to publish our “Sight News”, 3 times each year. It provides up to date information, interesting relevant articles and opportunities for users to access or get involved in. Increasingly, many copies now are distributed electronically but a small number are still sent in hard copy format.

Web site

We recognise the ongoing need to improve our website and make it relevant and accessible to our current and future users and carers, is an important function. We have been redesigning the format and its functionality over the past year. It is work in progress but much improved to date.

Links with other Herts user groups

We continue to maintain links with other Hertfordshire independent support groups aiming to provide seamless services for the visually impaired.

Minibus

While we offer the minibus for our users for trips and events, we have begun to use it to market our services by using it at community events, where people can see our logo displayed.

Schools programme

Slowly HVL has been able to return to some of our schools which we worked with pre covid. Our aim continues to be informing and providing sight awareness training sessions to all schools within Hertfordshire.

HCC contract

We have completed a successful 1st year of our contract with HCC, in partnership with HHAS and we have been retained for the second year. We have taken on additional Low Vision assessments for the Council and supporting Sensory Services backlog of referrals. To broaden our ability to inform and support regarding sight awareness, we have developed webinar training which has been well received.

Working with Sensory services workload

While our Hertfordshire County Contract is functioning well, we have also been supporting the sensory services department where there are staff shortages. It is beneficial for HVL and the visually impaired as we can contact them quicker than they would have previously been. This means that people receive targeted support sooner.

Working with NHS

There is increasing joint working with parts of the NHS in both the acute and social care settings across Hertfordshire and our Neighbouring counties.

Appreciation

I conclude with a big 'Thank You' to current staff, volunteers and Trustees.

Our Board comprises of 9 Trustees, each with a role within the organisation, whether it be chairman of one of our sub board committees and/or lead supporting advisory roles, such as Safeguarding, Risk management, or Volunteers

Our volunteers continue to provide sterling support and input for our Service users in various ways, providing continuity and friendship across the county.

We have had a few staff starters & leavers during the year. Wishing the leavers good luck for the future and welcome to the new staff. They have joined the hardworking and dedicated existing staff to make a cohesive and effective team, led by our superb Chief Executive, Jo Carter, whose innovative and persistent work has maintained our Charity in its viable state.

We also have benefited from our independent financial examiner, Tara Petri who once again has provided this scrutiny to our 2021-2022 accounts.

I thank everyone for their input, support and hard work and look forward to a continuing positive future.

Alex Hickinbotham
Chair
Herts Vision Loss

4. Overview from the Chief Executive, Joanna Carter



I am pleased to present the annual report and accounts for Herts Vision Loss for 2021/22. We have had a great year re-organising services and rebuilding ourselves. We missed our face-to-face contact and were thrilled, when on the 19th July 2021, all restrictions in England were lifted.

Since 19th July, we have found that confidence has built and more and more people in our support groups are getting back together again. Theatre trips and outings have resumed, and all our home visiting services are fully functional.

I am pleased to say that we are supporting more people with a sight loss than ever before. We have found that needs have changed, and we are proud of the way that we have adapted to meet their needs. There is an increased demand and reliance upon technology, and we have worked hard to secure funding opportunities to grow our equipment services.

We have been fortunate to receive grants from many organisations, including HCF, Groundworks UK, St Albans Community fund, Herts Communities NHS Trust and The National Lottery. We have also been very generously supported by a number of county counsellors.

You will note from the last Annual Report, that our Headquarters has changed. Despite actively searching for a dedicated property to buy, we have now settled in at Weltech Business Centre and look forward

to our development. We are still keen to move to a dedicated space where we can provide a resource and education centre, counselling suites and a social space for our service users to come to. We can't wait for the interactive buzz again and this move is an exciting chapter for Herts Vision Loss.

In the last report I talked about our success at securing the Hertfordshire County Council Sensory Services Contract. I am very pleased to say that we commenced this at pace. It sees us delivering a comprehensive service to adults with a sensory impairment. We have subcontracted Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service to deliver services to the deaf community and we look forward to this partnership going from strength to strength.

I have seen some changes to my team this year. Vanessa Browell retired as our counsellor and Sophia Ramsden also moved to pastures new. I wish them both the best of luck. We welcomed Patsy Slew as a new Vision Loss Advisor and hope that she enjoys her new role.

I am fortunate to be supported by a dedicated team who are always seeking out innovative ways of delivering good quality services. All our team play critical roles in delivering the charities work and I take this opportunity to appreciate all our team members.

We receive such positive feedback about the work we do from service users and their families and friends as well as from other partners and we have continued to receive positive feedback through these difficult times. In particular, our home visiting service has been described as "a life saver, the highlight of the week, something that is very much looked forward to". Hearing this feedback really does help us to drive things forwards. We always work in line with our strategic objectives and incorporate the UK vision's strategic direction into our work. This ensures that:

- Everyone knows how to look after their eyes and their sight.
- Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, there are early and appropriate services and support.
- A society where people with sight loss can fully participate.

We continue to move from strength to strength, however, we couldn't do any of this work without the support from the local community as well as our dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and trustees, who strive to deliver the highest quality of service

Thank you!

Joanna Carter (CEO)

5. Meet the Board

Alex Hickinbotham (Chairman from June 2020) is a retired Senior Manager in the Health Service having qualified as a nurse and midwife. She has over 40 years NHS experience. She has successfully run her own business, specialising in service transformation. She has been a Trustee for HVL and another charity since 2015. In addition, she also works with the St Albans and Harpenden Patients Group, St Albans and District Council Health and Wellbeing Partnership, Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (changed to Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board and Partnership from April 2022), and West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust as a patients' representative and Parish Council on planning issues. She has a Masters' Degree in Business Administration in addition to her clinical qualifications.

John Page * (Vice Chair from June 2020) is a degree-qualified electrical engineer and has spent 40 years working in the defence industry, the last 33 of those being at British Aerospace/MBDA in Stevenage, before retiring in 2013. During his time at work, he managed multi-site teams and budgets as well as performing technical design roles. Shortly after retiring, John joined the charity as a Volunteer to produce and maintain their new website, before moving on to provide IT support for service users and one-to-one training in the use of talking software. John has Macular Degeneration and coping with this gives him a good understanding of the day-to-day problems people with sight impairment have and the role the Charity has to play in supporting them.

Paul Taylor is a retired finance director with several years' experience in working with large organisations to support financial turnaround.

Paul had given support with the financial operations over the last few years.

Keith Harding is an ex-Corporate Bank Manager and Business Consultant who has been involved at Board level in Charities for the last 20 years. Keith retired in November 2021, and we are very grateful for all he has done from the charity since he was appointed to the board in 2007.

Richard Seaman (Previous Chairman) has global experience of working in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. From 2002 to 2011 he was the Executive Director of Abbeyfield International, the charity which provides affordable sheltered housing and extra care homes for the elderly around the world. Prior to this, Richard had a 30-year career in the IT company IBM, where he worked in marketing, finance and sales operations for the firm in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Birmingham.

John Warner Smith (Previous Chairman) is a retired GP with over 30 years' experience. During his time working in a Stevenage practice, he had particular responsibility for purchasing or commissioning healthcare for patients, beginning with GP Fundholding and later working with CCGs, PCTs and Locality Groups. He kept the accounts for the practice for 20 years, being also responsible for maximising (and then keeping to) healthcare budgets.

Alison Macdougall is a qualified Orthoptist working part time for Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust eye services in St Albans and Hemel Hempstead. She is also a Herts Vision Loss hospital volunteer. She was an Orthoptist with East and North Herts NHS Trust hospitals for 12 years. Before that she worked in North London, Peterborough and Glasgow. Alison moved from Lincoln with her family in 1999 to Hertfordshire. She has an interest in low vision and learning disabilities. Her previous roles have been as an Intervenor with the charity Sense and at Lakeside SLD School in Welwyn Garden City where she supported a student with sight and hearing impairment. While living in Lincoln she worked in Social Services as a Social work Assistant for those with Visual Impairment and oversaw a local 'Blind' Club.

Jennie Beebe has been working in marketing for 15 years, with experience in a variety of commercial environments, working as Chief Marketing Officer in her current role. Specialisms include marketing strategy, leadership, business planning and e-commerce. Jennie has a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature, a Master's Degree in Creative Industries Management and recently qualified in Mental Health First Aid.

Raj Visram initially started his career in software consultancy after studying Physics. He has a successful history of Project management consultancy service for a variety of organisations, including not for profit, international business and commercial businesses. Raj has supported many voluntary organisations and was the previous Chairman of St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme, where he has volunteered for over 10 years. Raj is active in local politics and in the St Albans community. Most interestingly he is Regional Head of the French Wine Society in the UK!

David Ottolanguai has over 40 years' experience in the pharmaceutical industry and has lived in Hertfordshire for over 30 years. He is married with two grown-up children and currently is managing director of his own pharmaceutical consulting business. David has previously held a position as a school governor in Cheshunt and more recently has been a volunteer during the Covid pandemic doing a range of roles from packing food parcels to helping out at Covid vaccination centres. He hopes to make a valuable contribution to HVL using his experience in both the business and commercial world. In addition to his volunteer work in his spare time David enjoys cycling, football, golf and building Lego!

Trustees' Areas of Responsibility

The Trustee Board members determine the general policy and ensure the governance of the Company. The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the Chief Executive

Organisation, Committees and Working Groups

The Charity has a Board of Directors that met every month during the pandemic but has now returned to meeting every quarter. The Board

is responsible for the strategic direction, policies and review and monitoring of performance. The following sub-committees of the Board were in place during the year:

- Finance and Governance Committee
- Service Committee
- Fundraising and Marketing Committee
- Premises Working Group

The chair of each committee presents reports and makes recommendations for action to the Board. The Chief Executive presents her report to the Committees and to Board.

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

The Trustees are the Directors of the Company for the purposes of the Companies Act, and Charity Trustees for the purpose of the Charities Act. The directors seek to ensure that all proposed directors enhance the existing, committed, and diverse body of directors and are able to provide the necessary skills, experience and commitment to the Charity's development before being approved and elected.

Proposals for directorship are made after advertising or personal recommendation. Each prospective candidate is interviewed by two Board members and the CEO. New directors are invited to attend the Charity's Board meetings at least once as a non-voting observer. This forms part of the Board co-option process.

All directors and proposed directors are issued with a copy of "The Essential Trustee", produced by the Charity Commission, copies of the Governing Document and a copy of the latest Annual Report and Accounts to enhance their understanding of their statutory responsibilities.

Each director is familiar with the work of the Charity and takes an active interest in the services and activities. Once elected to the Board, a director serves a term of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

Committees and Membership

Finance and Governance Committee

Paul Taylor	Chair
Keith Harding	Trustee (retired)
Alex Hickinbotham	Trustee
John Warner-Smith	Trustee
Raj Visram	Trustee
In Attendance	Chief Executive

Services Committee

Alex Hickinbotham	Chair
John Page *	Trustee
John Warner-Smith	Trustee
Alison Macdougall	Trustee
David Ottolanguai	Trustee
Raj Visram	Trustee
Leigh Davies	Sensory Services Rehabilitation Officer
In attendance	Chief Executive

Fundraising and Marketing Committee

Richard Seaman	Chair
John Page *	Trustee
Jennie Beebe	Trustee
David Ottolanguai	Trustee
Sandra Page	Volunteer
Gill Richardson	Volunteer
In attendance	Chief Executive

Premises Working Group

John Page *	Chair
Raj Visram	Trustee

Sue Firth	Volunteer Coordinator
Patsy Slew	Vision Loss Advisor and Admin
Joanna Carter	Chief Executive
Richard Seaman	Trustee
David Ottolanguì	Trustee
John Warner-Smith	Trustee

*Indicates visually impaired person.

6. Meet the Team

The Chief Executive is supported by a small team of permanent staff covering finance, administration, and fundraising, together with a field-based team who deliver the front-line services, who are in turn supported by dedicated volunteers without whom the Charity would not function so successfully. The Directors would like to thank the team, staff and volunteers, for their commitment and hard work.

The team consists of:

Joanna Carter (CEO)

joanna.carter@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Sophie Chapps (Vision Loss Advisor)

Sophie.chapps@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Sue Firth (Volunteer Coordinator)

volunteering@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Debra Lavington (Office Administrator)

office@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Monica Ansbro (Finance Officer)

monica.ansbro@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Alma Henderson (Counsellor)

alma.henderson@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Patsy Slew (Office administrator) – appointed June 2021

Patsy.slew@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Vanessa Macdonald (Vision Loss Advisor)

Vaness.macdonald@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Beth Moore (Facebook Coordinator)

Beth.moore@hhas.org.uk

Vanessa Browell (Counsellor) – retired in September 2021

Sophia Ramsden (Vision Loss Advisor) left in April 2021

7. Governance

Our Mission

‘Supporting and empowering the people in Hertfordshire with a visual impairment’.

Our Vision

- The people of Hertfordshire know how to look after their eyes and their sight.
- Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, there are early and appropriate services and support.
- A society where people with sight loss can fully participate.

Between 2015-2021, HVL’s strategy has been one of **Growth** and **Outcome**. We will reach and support thousands more blind and partially sighted people who most need our help. We will work to ensure that people who are experiencing loss of sight receive the support that they need to rebuild their lives. We aim to make sure that blind and partially sighted people get advice, support and access to services to make the most of their lives. We will work to change our local community so that it fully includes blind and partially sighted people as equal citizens and consumers. We will continue to monitor the prevalence of sight loss and ensure that our accessible services meet the demands across Hertfordshire.

Our Values:

Our values describe our ethos. They underpin our behaviour and help us to judge our actions. They are:

Sustainability	We use all resources effectively and efficiently
Inclusive	We include and value people with diverse experience, abilities, and backgrounds.

Giving	We give our help and support to those who need it in a non-judgemental way, ensuring that blind and visually impaired people are at the heart of all that we do
Health.	We promote good health and wellbeing amongst our service users, volunteers and staff alike.
Transparent.	We are open and honest in all that we do.

“Visually impaired people are at the heart of all we do”

8. Principal Activities

Counselling



Our trained counsellors continue to operate services for our blind and visually impaired community and their families and carers. The counselling service has been very well received and has had very positive feedback. However, it is becoming more and more challenging to fund this service and we are actively looking for opportunities to support with funding. The online and telephone counselling service has proved very popular, and the model continues for those with transport difficulties

Home Visiting and Befriending

We continue to provide home visits and befriending service users to reduce social isolation and loneliness. During the year we have at times needed to flex our services and provide telephone and online befriending schemes as required, particularly for those who are clinically vulnerable.

Volunteering

We have 137 active volunteers on our database. We do continue to advertise volunteering opportunities and provide a range of things that people can support with. Many volunteers have been able to support our telephone befriending services and will keep this going as we emerge from the pandemic as it has become a very valued service. We have several dedicated volunteer drivers who have been hugely

appreciated. They have enabled many people to get out and about on outings and trips and we are very grateful for this.

Hospital Information Services

These continue at the acute hospital Trusts. Our representatives in the hospital are very well received and support the acute trust with training and information services. The low vision clinics lead to many people being sign-posted to our services as well as to the services of others. There is no dedicated ECLO service in Hertfordshire, which is something that would really benefit the service and offer a dedicated pathway for HVL and service users.

As part of the Sensory Services Contract, HVL took over the CVI (certificate of visual impairment) registration process. This means that we are the first port of community contact for patients from the clinics. We offer them timely support and advice and have helped streamline the whole process. Sensory Services have seen a dramatic reduction in their referrals since we adopted the new process, and this will ultimately reduce waiting times for patients to receive specialist ROVI (Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment) advice.

Sight Information Points (SIPs)

We have undertaken several events online as well as in the communities, social care settings and schools. Webinars continue as well as the new provision of specialist sight awareness training.

We provide a range of other services and deliver time specific projects. Our website provides details. To enable the delivery of the key projects we rely heavily on external funding. We have received funding from the local authorities; however, the rest of the running costs are provided through charitable donations and fundraising. We are fortunate to have been very well supported over the last few years and we are working hard to ensure that the support continues.

The Charity continues to work in partnership with our colleagues from Sensory Services and Ophthalmology Departments in hospitals across the county, together with voluntary organisations both locally and nationally.

9. Our Performance

Thanks to a fabulous team effort by staff, volunteers and trustees and with the support of Hertfordshire County Council and many funders, our achievements include:

- Tendering and being successful in the bid to deliver the provision of sensory services in Hertfordshire.
- Growth of the counselling service.
- Delivering an excellent service to our service users, their family members and carers.
- Enhancing hospital service provision
- The development of new initiatives and expansion of the current services.
- Implementing new online events and clubs
- Providing transport and travel on our dedicated minibus.
- Well-being courses and mental health toolkits
- Providing work placements for university students
- Immense flexibility to deliver services during Covid-19 pandemic.
- Expanding the content of our Sight News Magazine
- Improving and developing our website and Social Media platforms.

We measure performance of our key service areas – Home Visiting & Befriending, Hospital Information and Equipment & Information Outreach – through both output and outcome measurements, the latter of which were agreed with our Commissioning Manager at Hertfordshire County Council. All our outcome measures have been achieved in 2021/2022.

Home Visiting and Befriending Service

The Home Visiting and Befriending Service helps to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired people in our community, the vast majority (75%) of whom are elderly, in retaining their independent living for as long as possible in their own home, help reduce loneliness and social isolation, whilst providing assistance with their daily living needs, in order to improve their quality of life. Our services are provided in line with the Care Act. We also provide, where applicable, a well-earned break for family members and carers from their caring responsibilities.

This key community service has been delivered by HVL since the 1920's. The service is managed by 3 VLAs and is supported by more than 100 volunteers. There are two strands for this part of the contract. The Vision Loss Advisors will contact people in their home, make assessments of their needs and source further support as required. When considered beneficial to service users the outreach support workers will match them with volunteers to reduce isolation.

The Home Visiting Service can quite often be the only contact and lifeline that some people have. The visits allow relationships to build, allow us to signpost service users to other organisations and ultimately serve to reduce hospital admissions and improve quality of life.

Hospital Information Service

The Hospital Information Service delivered by our staff and volunteers, supports the Ophthalmology Departments by adding capacity and advice regarding services that the charity can offer. We aim to help visually impaired people during low vision and general eye clinics, providing them with support during the difficult diagnosis period and reduce the workload for NHS paid staff. We also aim to support their pathway and make it as seamless as possible in the absence of ECLO support.

The contracted provision of services with the Hertfordshire County Council is as follows:

- Advice and information about sight loss, registration, signposting and/or referral to other services, support services and rehabilitation after sight loss at six county hospitals – QEII, Lister, St Albans, Hertford, Watford and Hemel Hempstead.
- Follow up support service for patients at low vision clinics, including information about access to low vision aids and equipment.
- Support and information provided to carers and/or family members regarding help and support offered by the Charity and other agencies.

- Enable patients to discuss their diagnosis, its non-medical implications and respond to any emotional and social consequences.

We measure the success of this service by patient feedback as well as the amount of people we come into contact with. In 2021/22 we met 675 people in the hospital location and through the CVI process. Many of these people go on to become regular users of the service and others may just need short term support.

Equipment and Information Outreach

This service enables relevant information, advice and guidance about sight loss and relevant services to be disseminated to blind and visually impaired people, family members and carers via sight information points, events, exhibitions and at our resource centres in Welwyn Garden City and Hemel Hempstead.

The contracted provision of services with the Hertfordshire County Council is as follows:

- Advice and information about sight loss, available support, services, equipment, gadgets and technology.
- Support, advice and information provided to carers and/or family members regarding help and support offered by the Charity and other agencies (for example, Sensory Services).
- Display and demonstration of low vision aids, gadgets, equipment and technology via personalised 'one to one' appointment at our centre in Welwyn Garden City or at one of our community sight information points.

Overall Summary of Services

We have delivered against our contracts and have demonstrated growth as we reach out to more service users. We have reported no Serious incidents and had no complaints. We are really pleased with our performance this year.

The Schools Programme

The school's programme is in its eighth year and has received very positive feedback. We have been invited back to many schools. Our dedicated team provides education and raises awareness. Reports have told us that we have helped reduce stigmas and reduce bullying in some areas. We plan to resume this service in November 2022, however, continue online services ahead of this.

Social Media / enhancing our profile

We have made progress in developing and enhancing our website and social media presence in 2021/22. We now have a dedicated team member who updates our website and Facebook pages. We have a new look website in progress and we hope to launch this in early 2023.



Support Groups

Support groups take place across the county. We now have established groups in Welwyn Garden City, Stevenage, Watford, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Waltham Cross. There are also many blind clubs running too. The groups have focussed on learning practical skills as well as having activities planned to reduce social isolation. There have been canal trips, cooking with confidence courses, theatre, tennis and seaside trips to name a few. We continue to facilitate groups encouraging independence and growth. Junior Sight life groups support children and their families.

The junior groups were established following a generous donation from Morrisons at Welwyn Garden City and continued as a result of a three-year grant received from BBC Children in Need.

Support groups are always expanding, with more people than ever benefitting

The service has grown year on year and the feedback we get is excellent. It is great to see members move on from the group as they gain their independence and confidence.

Corporate Objectives

During the year, the Board monitored the performance of the Charity against the objectives set out below:

- To at least break even and aim to grow income each financial year.
- To raise our public profile by increasing media coverage, networking activities and promotional material
- To achieve and maintain effective quality assurance systems
- To deliver and broaden services to meet emergent and current contractual obligations
- To retain, train and support staff and volunteers to ensure excellent services are delivered
- To maintain and develop appropriate physical resources to enable services to be delivered and enhanced

Performance and Results

The Board of Directors' Annual Report for the year to 31st March 2022 reports links between the Charity's Governing Document and the Statement of Financial Activity. This will be demonstrated by reporting the aim of the charity, our corporate strategies and how our principal activities have been achieved.

Quality Assurance

The Charity was awarded the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO) quality assurance kite mark (Level 1), by the Charities Evaluation Services in January 2018. HVL will be looking at other accreditors in 2022.

Financial Summary

The Charity generated a surplus of £1,499 in the year ending 31st March 2022.

The Statement of Financial Activities (see pages 28 to 33) is in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 with all gains and losses recognised in the year.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the Charity's risk management activities. Detailed consideration of risk is delegated to the Finance and Governance Committee, who review this matter and report thereon to the Board. The Charity has an up-to-date risk register that is reviewed on a monthly basis. Operational risks are scrutinised by the Services Committee.

Serious Incidents

No serious incidents were reported in 2021/2022.

Complaints

No complaints have been received.

Reserves Statement

The Charity's reserves policy focuses on the 'net current assets', which amount to £93,390 as at 31st March 2022. This equates to more than three months' operating costs together with costs of any statutory payments to staff should normal funding sources be absent.

Payments

The Directors acknowledge the importance of maintaining goodwill by meeting financial obligations to staff, volunteers, and suppliers, in a timely manner. The Charity seeks to pay its bills within 30 days of receipt

Financial Scrutiny

The Finance and Governance Committee takes the lead in supervising the Charity's financial affairs and the maintenance of proper financial records and procedures in order to ensure the charity's financial viability. The Committee meets several times during the year to review, monitor, discuss and make recommendations on, amongst

other matters, the management accounts, the budget for the next financial year and the Annual Report and Accounts respectively.

Directors' Interest in the Shares of the Company

The Company is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital; therefore, the directors have no interest other than the extent of the limited guarantee, as a Member, as denoted in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

10. Looking to the Future

We are very excited about our future and developing and expanding the services we offer. The Covid-19 pandemic gave us time to evaluate our provisions, talk to service users and their families and really understand how they could best be supported in the emerging world.

As a result we will be:

- Attracting and increasing the number of people accessing the services
- Further partnership working with other organisations to enhance our portfolio.
- Finding suitable premises
- Moving premises
- Expanding and modernising our equipment portfolio
- Winning contracts to ensure income generation
- Reaching out to our community to ensure that we are delivering the services that they want
- Holding engagement events
- Applying for the Queens award for volunteers
- Holding fun and well attended meetings/groups
- Increase staff and skills
- Full development of the website
- Increasing profile on social media
- Identifying Board support links, e.g., informal legal advice
- Recruiting new patrons
- Ensuring financial stability
- Increasing the profile of the charity

- Fundraising events

Plus much more!

11. Independent Examiner

The Independent Examiner (IE) is "an independent person who is reasonably believed by the Charity's Trustees to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts" (Charities Act 1993 s 43 (3) (a)).

Therefore, an IE does not need to be a qualified accountant. A person "qualified by experience" - a retired person with financial skills for example - could be considered by the trustees. The IE should always be independent and should have no connection with the organisation, which might inhibit the impartial examination, such as a personal or business connection to a trustee or employee.

The Board invited Mrs Tara Petri to independently examine the Charity's accounts.

Mrs Petri is a qualified accountant, being a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants as well as Finance Director of AA Woods Ltd. She has over 20 years' experience.

A resolution proposing the appointment of Mrs Petri as Independent Examiner of the Company will be put to the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. We record our sincere thanks to her for her expertise on our behalf during the reported year.

12. Independent Examiner's Report

To the Members on the un-audited accounts of Herts Vision Loss, I report on the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021, which are set out in the section headed Financial Reports on pages 28 to 33.

Respective Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed. Having satisfied myself that the Charity is not subject to audit under Company Law and is eligible for an Independent Examination, it is my responsibility to:

1. Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
2. To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act and 3.
3. To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Opinion of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the
- Companies Act 2006; and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Company Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met, or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mrs Tara Petri, Independent examiner

14. Financial Reports

Statement of Financial Activities

	Note s	Year ended 31 st March 2022			Year ended 31 st March 2021 £
		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £	
Income					
Donations & Legacies	1	13,603	-	13,603	13,361
Charitable Activities	2	3,093	268,506	271,599	107,227
Investments	3	2,154	-	2,154	6,559
Total Income		18,850	268,506	287,356	127,197
Expenditure					
Raising Funds		131		131	226
Charitable activities	4	17,220	268,506	285,726	126,671
Total Expenditure		17,351	268,506	285,857	126,897
Gross Income/Expenditure		1,499		1,499	300
Release of Designated Funds					
Net Income / Expenditure		1,499	-	1,499	300
Reconciliation of Funds					
General Reserve					
Funds brought forward		94,306	-	94,306	94,006
Net movement in funds in year		1,499		1,499	300
		95,804	-	95,804	94,306
Designated Reserve for Premises		659,677	-	659,677	659,677
Total funds carried forward		755,481	-	755,481	753,983

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

		As at 31 st March 2022 £	As at 31 st March 2021 £
Fixed Assets & Investments			
Land & Buildings		-	-
Motor Vehicles	5	0	3,453
Furniture & Equipment		2,414	3,616
Designated Funds for Premises	6	659,677	659,677
Total Fixed Assets & Investments		662,091	666,746
Current Assets			
Debtors & Prepayments	7	10,336	11,539
Short Term Deposit	8	154,946	135,837
Cash at Bank & In Hand	9	8,716	9,839
Total Current Assets		173,998	157,215
Current Liabilities			
Creditors		4,452	6,869
Accruals		21,436	21,325
Grants relating to a future period		52,673	40,425
Payroll Liabilities		2,047	1,361
Total Current Liabilities		80,608	69,980
Net Current Assets		93,390	87,237
Total Assets less Liabilities		755,481	753,983
The Funds of the Charity			
General Reserve		95,804	94,306
Designated Reserve for Premises		659,677	659,677
Total Charity Funds		755,481	753,983

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31st March 2022, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies, subject to the small companies' regime

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

S. Alexandra Hickinbotham



Alex Hickinbotham
Chair of Trustees

Paul Taylor
Secretary

7/11/2022

Notes to the Accounts

1. Donations & Legacies

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
Donations	6,403	8,361
Legacies	7,200	5,000
	-	
	13,603	13,361

2. Income from Charitable Activities

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
HCC Contract	244,800	58,655
Project Grants	19,627	37,168
Fundraising	210	770
Training		700
Advocacy Project	-	-
Lettings	-	-
Trading income	480	344
Counselling	1,450	1,540
Locality Grants	4,078	8,100
Activities	-	
Minibus Hire	753-	
Newsletter Advertising	-200	-
Access to Work	-	-
Apprenticeship Scheme	-	-
Other Income	-	
	271,599	107,277

3. Investments

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
Interest Received	2,154	6,559

4. Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	31 st March 2022 Total £	31 st March 2021 Total £
Staff Costs Note 4a	118,538	96,469
Office Expenses	6,931	6,739
Property Costs	8,931	5,488
Fees & Insurance	8,663	6,959
Newsletter	2,777	1,537
Activities	438	272
Student Placements	0	0
Volunteer Costs	779	390
Minibus Hire	3,432	2,731
Training	1,465	60
Other	2,416	1,051
Depreciation	4,876	5,026
HHAS Partnership	126,480	
	285,726	126,671

4a. Staff Costs

	31 st March 2022 Total £	31 st March 2021 Total £
Staff Salaries	112,266	95,041
National Insurance	3,304	983
Pension	265	236
Travel & Subsistence	2,703	209
	118,538	96,469
Number FTE Employees	4.09	3.25

5. Fixed Assets*

	Motor Vehicles £	Furniture & Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
Brought Forward	15,065	78,809	93,874
Additions	-	220	220
Disposals	-	-	-
Carried Forward	15,065	79,029	94,094
Depreciation			
Brought Forward	11,612	75,192	86,804
Charge for Year	3,453	1,423	4,876
Disposals	-	-	-
Carried Forward	15,065	76,615	91,680
Net Book Value at 31st March 2022	0	2,414	2,414
Net Book Value at 31 st March 2021	3,453	3616	7,069

6. Designated Funds for Premises

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2020 Total £
Designated Fund for Premises	659,677	659,677

7. Debtors & Prepayments

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
Prepayments	3,260	3,282
Gift Aid income due	0	735
Deposits Paid	1894	-1,894
Trade Debtors	5182	5,628
	10,336	11,539

8. Short Term Deposits

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
Shawbrook 100-day Notice	31,531	31,531
Santander Instant Reserve	123,415	104,306
Undeposited Funds	0	0
	154,946	135,837

9. Cash at Bank & in hand

	31st March 2022 Total £	31st March 2021 Total £
Cash	10	11
Santander Business Account	8,706	9,828
	8,716	9,839

Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain assets and in accordance with the statement of recommended Practice: Accounting for Charities.

Income

Grants, donations and legacies are taken to the statement of financial activities when there is a reasonable assurance of receipt. Grants relating to a future period are deferred.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at the following rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Furniture & Equipment	25% Straight Line
Motor Vehicles	25% Straight Line

Taxation

The company is a registered charity and is exempt from tax on its income and gains applied to charitable purpose. The company is not registered for VAT.

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